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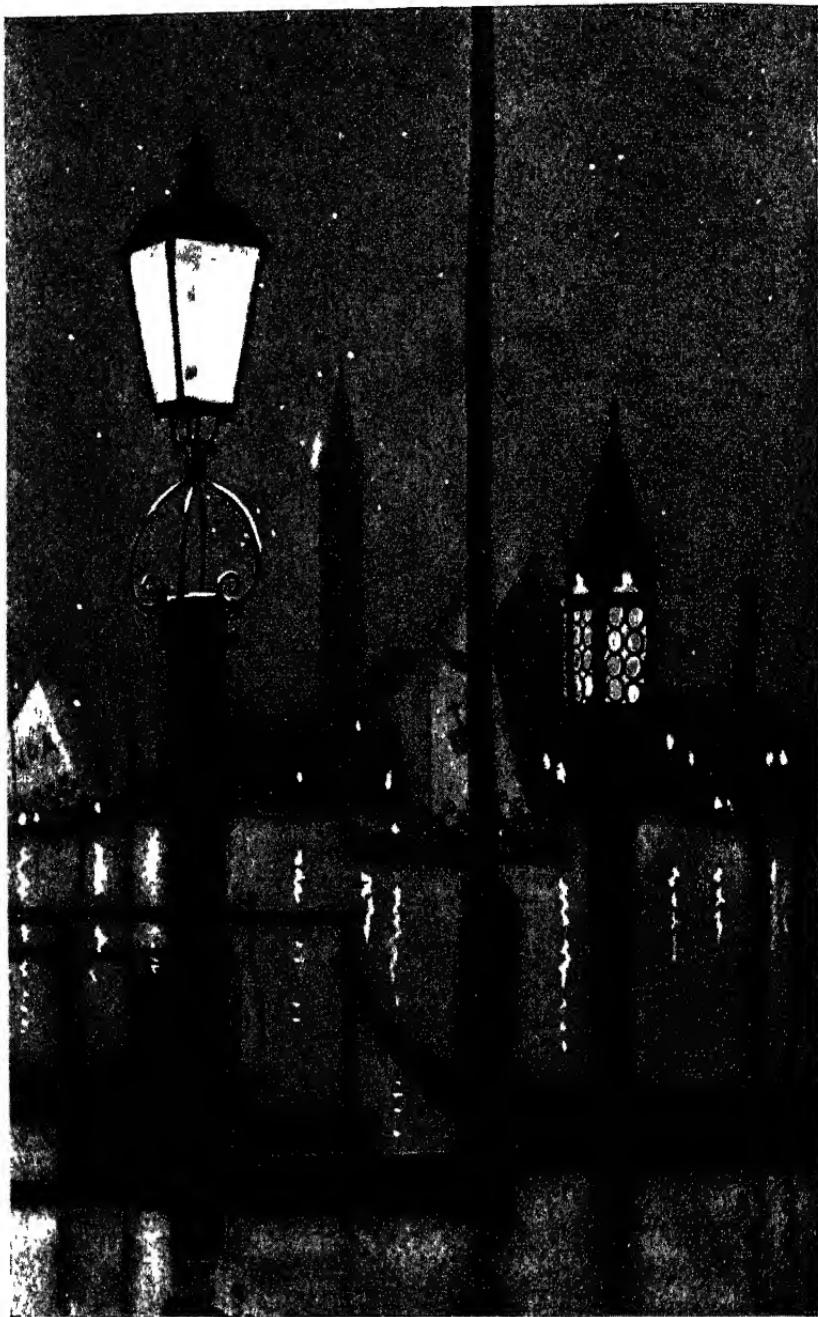
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VENETIAN LAMPS

Fr

ENCHANTED ISLES

By
STANLEY ROGERS
Illustrated by the Author



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TO
MARY ROGERS SAGE

FOREWORD

A MIABLE reader, do not hold a pistol to my head if I have looked at my subject through the rose-coloured spectacles of an incorrigible romanticist, bestowing the adjective 'enchanted' on places that you would praise in less extravagant terms. Where saner travellers would see nothing more than barren rocks and cold grey mists, or hot, insect-infested sands and a few ragged palms, I have chosen to find enchantment. But there is no accounting for tastes, and I am sustained by a secret belief that ere you have travelled far on this curious voyage with me—I say voyage, since islands can only be reached by water—that you, reader, will find yourself in full agreement with my choice of qualifying adjective. But it is an elastic term that can mean little or much, since there is enchantment in so many widely dissimilar things. Sunlight through the leaves of trees is enchanting, but so too is moonlight filtering down like silver dust on to the stones of an English country churchyard. So also the sound of a guitar coming softly across a lagoon on a summer night, or snow silently falling in a deserted street. There is virtually no limit to enchantment. Like the kingdom of heaven, it is within one.

Summer days—I see two people sitting beneath an oak-tree in a meadow deep with lush grass. Along the lower end of the meadow is a close-set row of willows, drooping their thin branches over a cool stream which runs deep between sedgy banks. There are blackberries in the hedge-rows and wild roses, and the bright points of poppy show among the tall grass. The ineffable sense of peace is intensified by the singing of birds and the drowsy hum of bees and tiny insects in the scented air. The brook bubbles over bright stones to a dark pool on which water insects skate

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aimlessly. Somewhere in the distance a mowing-machine makes a friendly clatter, and on the faint breeze rides the clean scent of new-mown hay. White butterflies, like scraps of paper, flutter over the grass, and furry bees crawl, buzzing, over the red clover. A hedge-sparrow cocks a beadlike eye with unabashed stare at the two curious invaders of his domain. One of the pair, looking into the clear shallows of the brook, sees a flash of silver as a fish darts at a too-rash insect, and a quite unexplainable happiness floods his soul. It cannot be accounted for, unless it is the enchantment in the air.

And what of his companion, a restless fellow with no eyes for the magic around him? Does he not feel the spell of the place? He is in fear of hay-fever, and has twice looked at his watch, thinking doubtless of his beloved city. For city streets are his passion; he writes of them and has made their life his own. He loves to wander alone in London's East End, observing the unlovely spectacle of life in its meaner alleys, and seeing in them an enchantment that he can express so well in such tricky little words that even you and I are bemused into believing them. He will describe a street of appalling ugliness, a street flanked on either side by a row of low grey-brick houses, their narrow doors opening directly on to the pavement. Grey slates, grey bricks—a drab vista of chimney-pots and brick, without a tree or a spot of green foliage to relieve the grim, stark ugliness. Where trees should be are hideous cast-iron lamp-posts, and in place of blue sky is a soot-laden pall from adjacent factories. Here and there a scrap of dirty paper, blown hither and thither, litters the untidy pavement, and the only sign of life, save for a dropsical old man sitting, coatless and collarless, at an open window, is a hawker with a barrow of limp vegetables and overripe fruit. The flat-fronted houses, staring across at each other in close-packed ranks, are as alike as a row of beads, except where one or two bear a roughly painted board over the door, A. TIMMS—

FOREWORD

CHIMNEY-SWEEP, or a dog-eared card in a dingy window conveys the laconic information Room to Let. A more dreary scene it would be hard to imagine. The hawker, cupping his hand to his mouth, cries out some unintelligible words, and a door opens. From it issues a thin woman with tired eyes and toil-knotted hands. Over her drab and sloppily hung skirt is a sack apron, and through the open door can be seen a pail of dirty water and a bar of yellow soap. She haggles with the hawker over three-pennyworth of potatoes, and re-enters the house with the trifling purchase gathered into the burlap apron. The door closes, and the street sinks into its former somnolence.

At nightfall—the night, which is kind to ugliness—the hard lines of the street soften into the enchanting gloom, and the unsightly windows light up with friendly and inviting warmth. Brick Street has become as mysterious and alluring as a Venetian canal through the magic touch of night. It is easy to imagine Cockney lovers meeting in doorways and under street-lamps, and finding in these slum trysting-places enchantment as potent as anywhere on earth.

Lector. But this is not concerned with islands.

Auctor. On the contrary, it has everything to do with islands. All episodes are islands, just as we ourselves are islands, dreadfully isolated from our fellows.

Lector. Let us not get on to that. Stick to your enchantment theme.

Auctor. Very well, but there is little more to say. I think I have clearly illustrated my point. There only remains a word to be said about the varied nature of the scenes. A steady diet of one thing is undesirable, and after the cloying sweetness of a South Sea idyll a little of the austerity, shall we say, of the Hebrides is a good thing—a corrective to mental and spiritual indigestion. Do not look here for the sort of pabulum served up so excellently by Herr Baedeker. This, after years of sweating over books of another *genre*, is

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to be a holiday for me—a tour without a dragoman and without a time-table. We may set out for Madagascar and never reach that curious country. But if you are bent on Madagascar then by all means go, and leave us to our unorthodox peregrinations.

S. R. H. R.

ÎLE DE CÉZEMBRE

June 1933

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ENCHANTED ISLES



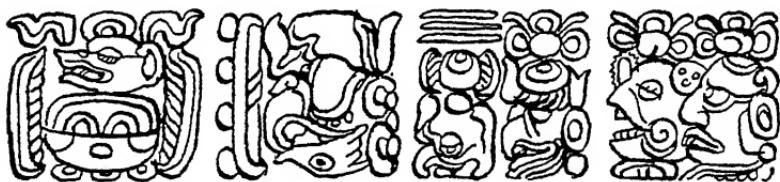
CHAPTER I

The Lost Atlantis

ONE of the most romantic stories in history is the legend of the lost islands of Atlantis. There is something in the very word 'Atlantis' that compels one's attention. But of its origin no historian is certain. There are those who hold that it was derived from 'Atlas,' the Titan who supported the world on his shoulders. According to Plato, the Atlantic Ocean was named after that muscular supporter of the earth, and it not unnaturally follows that the lost islands of Atlantis should be named from the same source. On the African littoral there are the Atlas Mountains, in further support of this suggestion of origin. On the other hand, some learned men believe that the name has a pre-Grecian origin, and that it comes from the Aztec civilization—that queer civilization which, despite its architecture, its arts, and its written language, never discovered the use of the wheel. Now these pro-Aztec archæologists say that the root of the word 'Atlantis' or 'Atlantic' is pure Nahuatl, an Aztec language in which the combination of the letters *atl* and *ailan* occurs with remarkable frequency. *Atlan*, in that tongue, meant 'on the border' or 'in the water,' a definition that immediately suggests the adjective 'Atlantic.' There is also *atalça*—i.e., 'to dart from the water.' Further, there is the ancient Maya city of Atlan, that stood by the shores of the Gulf of Uraba, in Darien. Again, to bring up another big gun on the pro-American side, there was Aztlan, the home of Aztec peoples, in what is now Central America. Thus, to the West there

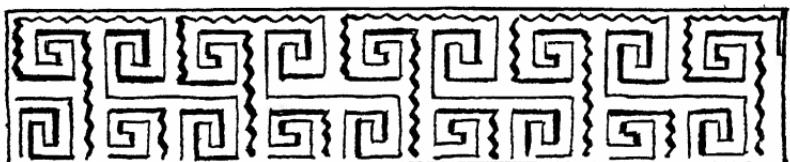
ENCHANTED ISLES

were such words as Aztlan, *atalça*, and *atlan*, and in the East—*i.e.*, Europe and Africa—Atlas and Atlantes, who were the male equivalent to the Caryatides. The people of the Barbary states were also known as the Atlantes to the



MAYA ART

Greeks and Romans. Therefore it is not to be marvelled at that the ocean lying between all these ‘atalans’ should be called Atlantic, nor the now lost islands Atlantis. So much for the etymology of Atlantis.



AMERINDIAN FRET SUGGESTIVE OF GREEK INFLUENCE

Ever since Plato the legend of the lost islands has appeared frequently in literature, but Francis Bacon, Viscount St Albans, was the noblest plagiarist of the Atlantean legend. His *New Atlantis* is a moral and philosophical work masquerading as fiction. Atlantis is Bacon’s version of Utopia. Writing in the first person, the author tells how he was wrecked on the island, and of the ideal civilization he found there. An unfinished work, it was first published after his death, and has since been thought to have been inspired by Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*. As a vehicle for airing the philosopher’s ideals on government and self-conduct nothing could have been better suited, but the teachings are now out of fashion and the style heavy and didactic.

The author describes how he sailed from Peru for China



ATLAS
The Farnese statue

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by way of the South Sea (the Pacific) with a number of companions, and how, after five months' voyaging, they came to a flat country and entered a harbour around which was built a fine city. They were met by a kindly and dignified official, who informed them that they must not land, and, furthermore, must be gone within sixteen days. But, as a token of the humanity of the islanders, the mariners were told that they need but write down their needs and these would be supplied.

The travellers answered in Spanish that they had many sick (an all too common thing in sixteenth-century seafaring), and that if not permitted to land must all surely die. They also wrote down their immediate needs. Three hours later a more important personage boarded the ship, a man in an azure gown and a green turban, who spoke Spanish. After questioning the strangers and being satisfied with their answers he allowed a large number of them to land. Ashore they were given luxurious accommodation and treated with great courtesy, the sick being given special quarters and attention.

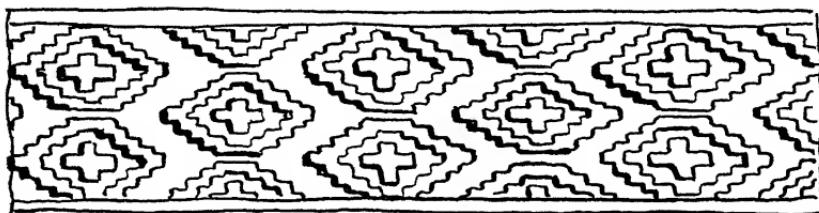
A sort of host, who also acts as guide, now takes charge of the strangers, and gives them a brief history of the country, which proves to be all that is left of the great Atlantis, which was almost entirely engulfed in the great flood of three thousand years before.

About three thousand years ago the navigation of the world was greater than now. The Phoenicians had vast fleets; so had the Carthaginians; China also, and the great Atlantis, that you call America, which have now but junks and canoes, abounded then in tall ships. This island had then fifteen hundred strong ships, and almost all the nations resorted hither. At the same time the inhabitants of the great Atlantis did flourish, and Mexico and Peru both made great expeditions upon our island. But the divine vengeance did overtake these proud enterprises; for within less than one hundred years the great Atlantis was utterly destroyed by a particular deluge. The same inundation was not deep; so

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that, although it destroyed man and beast generally, a few escaped. So we lost our traffic with the Americans. In the ages following, navigation did greatly decay, so that intercourse from nations sailing to us has long since ceased.

Thus Bacon explains the existence of his New Atlantis, linking it up with the old. In the course of time the author learns more about the country and describes the Atlantean civilization, showing in the process his remarkable *flair* for accurate prophecy. For example, the Atlanteans had



AMERINDIAN ORNAMENT

meteorological stations on high towers, hydro-turbines, a more than Luther Burbank knowledge of horticulture, grafting, inoculating, and the raising of super-fruit and flowers. This process of selection was carried even further in animals, and the art of dissection for the benefit of man had worked great good to the people.

We have divers mechanical arts which you have not, and stuffs made by them, as papers, linens, silks, tissues, dainty works of feathers, and excellent dyes. We have also perspective-houses, where we make demonstrations of all lights and radiation and of all colours. We procure means of seeing objects afar off. We have also glasses to see small and minute objects plainly. We have sound-houses, where we practise harmonies of quarter-sounds, and divers instruments to you unknown. We have certain helps which do further the hearing greatly, and have also all means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances. We imitate the flights of birds; we have some degree of flying in the air; we have ships and boats for going under the water [thereby anticipating the Wrights, Blériot, Farman, Jules Verne, Holland

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and Simon Lake]. We have also houses of deceits of the senses, where we represent all juggling, false apparitions, and illusions. We do hate deceits and lies.

There are many that have had stab at prophecy—Milton, Tennyson, Jules Verne, H. G. Wells—but none with greater prescience than the creator of the New Atlantis. There were other so-called amenities of civilization possessed by the Atlanteans, but we have heard enough. The uncompleted book ends where the author receives the blessing of his noble guide, and permission to publish an account of what he has seen and heard, for the benefit of other nations.

Leaving fiction and coming down to fact, what do we find in favour of the existence of an actual Atlantis? What evidence is there that the whole story is not merely the amplification of a rumour born in ages so remote that its origin is lost for ever? For centuries historians and others have taken sides over this well-nigh unsolvable riddle. In the eighties of the last century an indefatigable champion of the cause of Atlantis—a gentleman named Ignatius Donnelly—wrote a large book¹ on the pro side, bringing forth a heavy battery of what is still considered by many as irrefutable proof of the existence of that disputed country. But the following year a certain Lord Arundell went to the trouble of publishing a book² intended to destroy the pretty fabric that Donnelly had so lovingly and laboriously built up. And so it has gone on, one champion rising up to speak, and another, with deplorable lack of sportsmanship, howling him down.

It is a curious and, at the same time, a satisfying thing that even the pedants—those crafty fellows who are lurking round every corner—that even they wistfully turn to romance as a relief from the intolerable burden of truth. The sober Lord Arundell, after doing his utmost to destroy the picture painted by Donnelly, after devoting learned pages to his dry-as-dust contentions, actually gives us in full the

¹ *Atlantis—the Antediluvian World.* ² *The Secret of Plato's Atlantis.*

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charming picture of Plato's Atlantis. The offering is gratuitous and almost irrelevant, since it has no effect either for or against his arguments. But it comes as a welcome relief from the tedium of talk which precedes it, and one is ready to believe that the erudite author must have felt something the same way about himself.

The antediluvian islands, called the Lost Continent or Atlantis, have been, because of their salubrity and Utopian conditions, likened to the garden of the Hesperides, the Elysian Fields, the garden of Alcinous, the Mesomphalos, Olympus, Asgard, the Islands of the Blest—a sort of insular Eden, an Arcadia in the Atlantic, somewhere over the horizon beyond the Pillars of Hercules, those twin promontories on opposite sides of the Strait of Gibraltar.¹ Now it is typical of the ancient world, this belief in a sort of earthly paradise; and Atlantis fits in very well with classical mythology. But it is truly said that you cannot have smoke without fire, and if the smoke was Atlantis what was the fire?

Herodotus, called the Father of History, made a valiant attempt to put into some order his knowledge of the post-diluvian world. A good deal of it was necessarily guess-work, for what might have been a priceless source of reference, the magnificent library at Alexandria, was destroyed by the terrible Turks, and there perished the enormous collection that contained the history of the world from earliest times. In the Alexandrian library was the history of Egypt, beginning at a period far more remote than we have any knowledge of, the history of America, of South

¹ In medieval times, or even earlier, a great many legends of similar mysterious islands originated, and all in time becoming part of the folk-lore in the respective countries of their birth. Thus the Portuguese Antilla, or Isle of the Seven Cities, and the Ila Verde, or Green Island, which in English charts as late as 1853 was actually marked as a rock lying in 44° 48' North and 26° 10' West. Among these mythical isles was the French Île Verte, the Island of Brazil, the Island of Lyonesse (the lost land off the Cornish coast), the lost Breton city of Is, the Welsh Avalon of King Arthur, and St Brendan's Island, which mariners were searching for down to the eighteenth century.

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Africa, of Australia (which doubtless included the history of the mysterious Polynesian race), and of parts of prehistoric Asia. Among this vast collection of manuscripts were the chronicles of the antediluvian island continent in the Atlantic. For our fragmentary knowledge of this continent we may thank the industry and retentive memory of Plato. He was fortunate in possessing an ancestor named Solon, a great lawgiver in the city of Athens some two hundred years before Plato's day. Solon visited the great

Alexandrian library, and learned from the lips of the wise men of Sais the history of the island of Atlantis, which, they said, had been overwhelmed by the great deluge of nine thousand years before. The story of the Flood is another case of no smoke without fire, for it was universally credited by ancient peoples. Plutarch says that Solon afterwards attempted to write in verse

what he had heard concerning the lost Atlantis, and, as we know, Plato's own account of the island was derived from, and inspired by, the earlier work of Solon.

There is really nothing impossible or even improbable in Plato's story. Atlantis he refers to as a continent, but to the ancients a large island would appear as such. There are no extravagant myths, no miracles nor gods nor fabulous creatures. It is indeed a perfectly straightforward and unvarnished history of a people who built fine cities, ships, canals, great temples, and lived by commerce and agriculture. Nothing in the account does violence to truth, and there is no suspicion of mythology to discredit its plausibility. There seems to be no ulterior motive for its

PLATO



THE LOST ATLANTIS

existence, no moral lesson, as in More's *Utopia* or Bacon's *New Atlantis*.

Apart from Plato's account, other, quite independent, records describe or refer to Atlantis, whose existence is thus confirmed from several sources. An extract preserved in Proclus from works long since lost, and which is quoted by the German Boeckh in a commentary on Plato, refers to islands beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and to people, on one of these islands, who treasured remembrances of Atlantis, handed down from their ancestors. This Atlantis was very large—so large that it once dominated all the near-by isles.

Again, the Roman historian Timagenes (first century B.C.), in writing of the Gauls, describes them as three distinct races: (a) aborigines, supposed to be Mongoloid, (b) Aryan Gauls, and (c) invaders from the West, who were said to have come from the distant island of Atlantis.

Marcellus, in a work on the Ethiopians, speaks of seven isles (these may have been the Canaries) in the Atlantic whose inhabitants preserved a definite memory of a greater country—Atlantis. Again, Diodorus Siculus relates that the Phoenicians discovered large islands several days' sail from the African coast—islands fertile, mountainous, covered with luxuriant forests, and with beautiful dwellings and gardens, and where the climate seemed perfect. This, however, sounds rather like Madeira or the Azores.

Ælian, in *Varia Historia*, Book III, chapter xviii, says that Theopompus (400 B.C.) recounted the story of how, in an interview between Silenus and King Midas of Phrygia, Silenus described to the King a land called Atlantis and its inhabitants, who were known as Meropes, and who lived in large cities.

Then there is the curious case of the lemmings, small Scandinavian rodents, mouse-like creatures, which at certain intervals, varying from five to twenty-five years, move across the countryside of Sweden and Norway in vast swarms, swimming rivers and lakes, always advancing, until they

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reach the sea. But even this does not stop them, for they plunge in and swim on until they perish—one of nature's grim ways of keeping down the birth-rate. Now the point of this curious phenomenon—hundreds of thousands of tiny rodents swimming out to sea—is that many believe this wholesale suicide to be a form of homing instinct, and that in remote times the lemming migrated to or from the lost Atlantis. Thus, obeying some primal instinct, their descendants, now domiciled in Scandinavia, periodically move westward in search of their lost home in the Atlantic.

A similar fatal migration is known to occur among certain birds.

Geologically the submergence of a vast tract of land is, of course, possible; the submergence of smaller areas is frequently occurring. Islands are born in a day, and as quickly destroyed by the sea. According to that fervid pro-Atlantean Ignatius Donnelly,

The submergence of Atlantis within the historical period was simply the last of a number of vast changes, by which the continent which once occupied the greater part of the Atlantic had gradually sunk under the ocean, while new lands were rising on both sides of it.

As an example of the spontaneous birth of an island there is the case of the terrific submarine upheaval off Iceland, in 1783, which was itself rocked by terrifying subterranean convulsions. Thirty miles off shore the sea boiled in a gargantuan turmoil, and an enormous mound of mud and volcanic rock rose from the sea and showered pumice dust over the water for a hundred and fifty miles around. Shipping was seriously interfered with, and the superstitious sailors were certain that the end of the world had arrived. After the convulsions had ceased and the volcanic dust had disappeared from the sea men ventured closer to the astonishing island; and found it, as one would expect, a hot, utterly barren land rising steeply, in high cliffs, out of the sea. On getting news of it the Danish King claimed it for

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the Crown and named it Nyöe—*i.e.*, New Island. His new possession was not, however, to be long enjoyed, for, as is the way with such islands, within a year it had vanished whence it had come. Soundings were made and a reef of rock was plumbed, thirty fathoms below the surface—Nyöe's sole reminder of its meteoric rise and fall. Incidentally the same chain of seismic disturbances which heaved the island out of the sea was responsible for the deaths of nine thousand people in Iceland.

In the year 1831, off the Sicilian coast, a new island spontaneously appeared and was most unromantically named Graham's Island. The island was found to be about two hundred feet high and some three miles in circumference. Alas! its days above water were numbered, for even before it had cooled the waves once more claimed it. It may not be without significance that at a point on the European coast opposite the supposed latitude of the hypothetical Atlantis one of the greatest and most destructive earthquakes of modern times occurred—to wit, the Lisbon quake on November 1, 1755. Most of the city of Lisbon was wiped out, and no less than *sixty thousand* people were killed. Off shore the seabed opened up, and as the ocean rushed into the vast submarine fissures large ships were sucked under and lost with their crews. This seismic disturbance was felt as far west as America and as far north as the Baltic. Had seismographs then been invented it would have been registered in the Pacific and, in fact, over the entire world. So



CONJECTURAL CHART OF THE
ATLANTIC BEFORE THE DELUGE

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widespread was its destructive force that on the North African coast a town of ten thousand inhabitants was engulfed. Many believed that the "great fires that destroyed Atlantis" still smouldered under the ocean floor.

While on this seismic subject let us consider the curious case of the lost island of Buss. I use the term 'lost' with some diffidence, since an island cannot be lost unless it is first found, and there is no conclusive proof that Buss Island ever existed. However, the evidence is of sufficient interest to justify its resuscitation from dusty and forgotten history. Though now regarded as mythical, the existence of Buss Island is as difficult to disprove as to prove, and it is not without significance that it maintained its position on former-day charts for three centuries. But, like the mysterious isles of Antilla, Brazil, and St Brendan, the time came when atlas-makers were (we hope reluctantly) forced by lack of evidence to leave it out of their charts.

When Martin Frobisher, in 1578, made his third and last voyage in search of the North-west Passage he sailed with a fleet of fifteen vessels of various sizes. One of these was

a small three-masted ship of the type known among ancient seamen as a 'buss.' She was of a type common enough then in the English and Dutch herring fishery and usually of from 50 to 70 tons' burden. This particular buss was named *Emmanuel* and came from Bridgwater, Somerset, and is referred to in some old records as the *Emmanuel of Bridgewater*.

After Frobisher had again failed to find the elusive North-west Passage the fleet became separated on the way back to



MARTIN FROBISHER

THE LOST ATLANTIS

England, and the *Emmanuel*, running into heavy weather, was left behind at the mouth of a rocky bay now known as Frobisher Bay. Slowly beating her way across the North Atlantic, the little buss, when in latitude 58° North, came upon a hitherto unknown island, which thereafter became the mysterious Busse (or Buss) Island. On her arrival in England the discovery was made known, and the first published account appeared in Best's narrative of Frobisher's voyages.

A fruitful new Iland discovered. The *Busse of Bridgewater*, as she came homeward, to ye South Eastwarde of *Freseland*, discovered a great Ilande . . . which was never yet founde before, and sayled three leagues along the coast, the land seeming to be fruitful, full of woods, and a champion countrie.

Another and more detailed account next appeared in Hakluyt, and was from a first-hand report by one Thomas Wiars, a passenger in the *Emmanuel*. According to this independent witness, the island was sighted on September 12, 1578. I will let Thomas Wiars tell it himself:

The *Busse of Bridgewater* was left in Bear's Sound, at *Meta incognita*, the second day of September, behinde the fleet, in some distress through much winde, ryding neere the lee shoare, and forced there to ride it out upon the hazard of her cables and ankers, which were all aground but two. The thirde of September, being fayre weather, and the wind North-north-west, she set sayle and departed thence, and fell with Frisland [Greenland] on the 8 day of September at 6 of the clocke at night; and then they set off from the South-west poynt of Frisland, the winde being at East and East-south-east ; but, that night the winde veared Southerly, and shifted oftentimes that night; but, on the tenth day, in the morning, the wind at West-north-west, fayre weather, they steered South-east by South, and continued that course until the 12 day of September; when about 11 a clocke before noon they descryed a lande, which was from them about five leagues; and the Southermost part of it was South-east by East from them, and the Northermost next North-north-east or North-east. The Master accompted

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that Frisland (the South-east point of it) was from him, at that instant when he first descried this newe island, North-west by North 50 leagues. They account this island to be 25 leagues long, and the longest way of it South-east and North-west. The Southerne part of it is in the latitude of 57 degrees and 1 second part, or thereabout. . . . There appeared two harbroughs upon that coast, the greatest of them seven leagues to the Northwardes of the Southermost poynt, the other but foure leagues. There was verie much yce neere the same lande, and also twentie or thirtie leagues from it.¹

Its earliest probable appearance on any chart was on Molyneux's globe (1592), and the position is seen to be $58^{\circ} 30'$ – 59° longitude, and 356° – 359° East from St Michael's in the Azores, which is equivalent to $3^{\circ} 27'$ West of Greenwich. Buss Island next appears on the famous Peter Planicius chart of 1594, but differs in position by a few minutes. In the following year it appeared on a chart printed in Amsterdam. Goos's globe (1621) includes it, and so too the chart (1633) showing the voyage of Captain Thomas James. Incidentally Henry Hudson, on his third voyage, in 1609, had failed to find it after a search. Then in the year 1673 there appeared in the fourth book of Seller's *English Pilot* a description and definite drawing of the island. Slightly simplified, I include a drawing of it here. The map was made by Captain Shepherd in 1671.

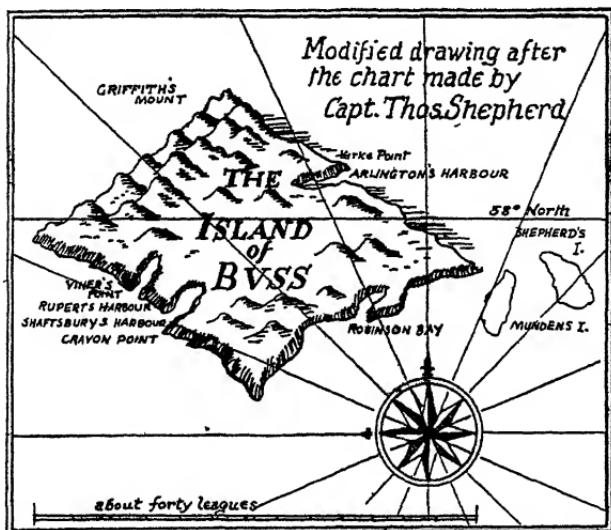
In 1668 a certain Captain Gillam asserted that on several occasions he had seen the island. Certainly he had not confused it with Iceland, a country which was well known, for he wrote, "South-westward from Iceland, about one hundred and forty leagues, lyeth an Island called Buss, in the latitude of 57 degrees 35 minutes, not yet fully discovered."

In the seventeenth century no one doubted its existence, but after various navigators failed to find it, despite patient search, it came to be referred to as "the Sunken Land of Buss." In June 1776 Lieutenant Pickersgill, in H.M. brig

¹ From Hakluyt's *Voyages*.

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Lion, on a voyage to Davis Strait, sounded over what he believed to be the site of Buss Island, and found from 290 to 320 fathoms. Sir John Ross, during his expedition to Baffin Bay in 1818, spoke of passing over "the Sunken Land of Buss," and took the trouble to get soundings. A year later another Arctic explorer, Sir William Parry, on his way



to search for the North-west Passage, took soundings over the reputed position of Buss Island. In spite of these failures to find it, Buss actually appeared on an English chart so late as the eighteen-fifties.

But this failure to find the island does not prove that it never existed, for it is by no means impossible for it to have sunk beneath the sea during one of the great submarine cataclysms of the last century. Only recently the bed of the North Atlantic for hundreds of miles off Newfoundland suffered such an upheaval that the transatlantic cables were broken and the old soundings made useless. The deeps and the plateaux of the sea-floor, the contour of submarine mountains, had altered beyond recognition. Apply this to Atlantis and Buss Island, and the inference is obvious.

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Everywhere in the ancient history of all races one will find references to the great cataclysm called the Deluge—in Aryan, Hebrew, Phœnician, Greek, and Amerindian. All their legends touching on the Flood point to the lost island continent of Atlantis. The Biblical Deluge was no myth, but an authenticated and historical fact. And to those who prefer to take Atlantis seriously it seems to me that the foregoing remarks are powerfully evidential facts. No need to arouse the opposition of the materialists by quoting the Deluge from Genesis—stark history is itself proof enough. That the Great Inundation, the Flood, the Deluge, was a scientific fact is no longer seriously disputed. The records of every race have some reference to this watery cataclysm. Berosus translated the account of the deluge of the Chaldeans from the sacred tablets of Babylon, and introduced it in the history he wrote for the Greeks. In Asia, Africa, the Americas, every race handed down the story of the Flood, that not improbably drowned the ancient world of Atlantis.

Plato described Atlantis as a land with a precipitous coastline, difficult and dangerous of access, a high, central plateau sheltered from the cold north winds by a screen of lofty mountains said to be the highest in the world. These could quite possibly be the present Azores,¹ since if these peaks were so lofty their summits could have survived the inundation of their vast flanks. The accompanying diagram of the ocean floor in the latitude of the Azores is helpful to visualize the gigantic convulsions of nature.

Plato gives in some detail a picture of the country, its customs, its people, and its government. The Atlanteans, we are told, built enormous temples and palaces, were familiar with copper, tin, bronze, gold, and silver. We read that they incised inscriptions and designs on columns, a custom universal in the ancient Aztec civilization.

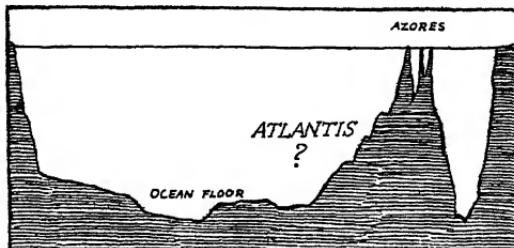
¹ Coins, said erroneously to be Phœnician, have been found on Corvo, one of the Azores, and may have belonged to an earlier civilization.

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Atlantis seems to have been composed of one enormous main island partially surrounded by a number of small isles lying to the east and west. The mountains were volcanic, and rising, as we have said, to a great height, and, of course, covered with eternal snow. On the elevated table-lands the royal palaces were built, both for reasons of strategy and health. The plateau, known as the Great Plain of Atlantis, opened to the south, allowing

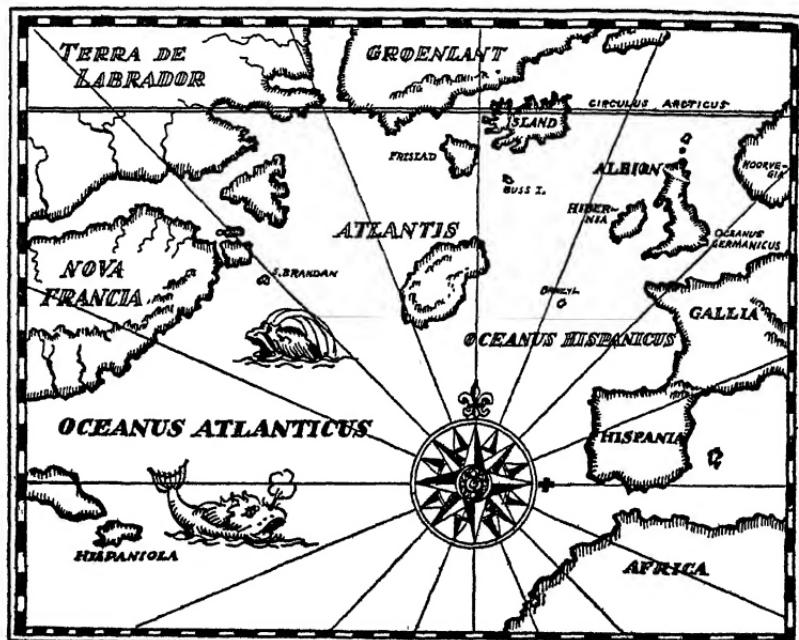
the warm meridional winds to preserve a climate known for its salubrity. The climate can be compared to that of the Azores, mild and pleasant. According to tradition, Atlantis possessed four main rivers, flowing north, south, east, and west from the central heights. The soil, like that of the Azores, was volcanic and fertile.

The Atlanteans appear to have been of two distinct races —dark reddish brown, like the Aztecs, the Egyptians, and the Berbers, and white, like the Greeks, the Goths, the Celts and Scandinavians. Although supposed to have been a land of felicity, Atlantis was frequently disrupted by interneceine wars for supremacy. Plato tells us that the inhabitants were the first to domesticate the horse, and describes their racecourses (hippodromes), in which the sport of kings first came into fashion. Besides horses the Atlanteans possessed the usual domestic and farm animals, and cultivated such products as one would expect in a semi-tropical country. Their engineers built aqueducts and viaducts, canals and docks. They were sculptors of high attainments, skilful metal-workers, and craftsmen in silver and gold. They possessed an alphabet, and therefore a written language, and worshipped one God. They were said to be daring builders and engineers, and built leviathan vessels, pyramids,



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and huge round towers. Their principal city was reached from the sea by means of a long canal. The capital itself was surrounded by three turreted walls of stone, "the outermost covered with brass, the centre one of tin and the inner flashed with the red light of orichalcum." Of this mysterious substance more in a moment. The city was noted



for its hot and cold springs, its enormous docks and navy yards, and, perhaps most of all, for its gigantic temple for the worship of the sea-god Poseidon. This temple was sheathed in polished silver, and contained a statue of the deity in virgin gold, standing so high as to reach to the roof. Plato describes the barbaric splendour of the temple, glittering with gold, silver, ivory, and orichalcum. The people of Atlantis, we are given to understand, were fond of display and rich living, much like the Romans at a later date. This scarcely harmonizes with the idyllic Utopia of More and Bacon.

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One of the most baffling questions touching Atlantean lore is, What was the mysterious metal called orichalcum? So far as I can discover it was a precious metal peculiar to Atlantis. Plato describes it as a substance which ranked with gold, and the secret of which was lost. He speaks of its being red in colour and shining or 'fat' in appearance. But it could hardly have been rare if the inner wall of the capital was covered with it, so that it "flashed with red light."

This concludes our brief case for Atlantis. Whether it existed or not does not, after all, much matter. But, thanks to Solon and his more distinguished relative, literature has been made the richer by it.

Now let us see how a modern romantic writer exploits the Atlantis theme to his own purpose. I have in mind the chapter in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* where Captain Nemo conducts M. Aronnax on a nocturnal submarine walk —on the ocean floor. They are wearing divers' headdresses, and have strapped to their backs the flasks of compressed air that permit them to wander free from hampering lines and air hose. The *Nautilus* is lying on a flat, sandy bottom at 150 fathoms, and the two men enter the water through the ingenious air lock. The author does not satisfactorily explain how the human body can withstand the crushing pressure at 900 feet. However, one must not carp at such trifles.

It was nearly midnight. The sea was in profound darkness, but Captain Nemo pointed out a reddish light in the distance, a sort of large light shining about two miles from the *Nautilus*. What this fire was, what fed it, or why and how it burned in a liquid like the sea I could not tell. Anyway it lighted us though somewhat dimly, but I quickly became used to the strange darkness, and saw how useless the Ruhmkorff apparatus would have been to us. Captain Nemo and I walked side by side straight towards the light, the flat ground ascending gradually. We took long strides, helping ourselves with our sticks, but our progress was slow, for our feet often sank in a sort of mud strewn with seaweed and flat stones.

Meanwhile the reddish light which had guided us grew in size

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and reddened the horizon. This fire beneath the sea aroused my curiosity to the highest degree. Was it an electric effluence? Were we walking towards a natural phenomenon as yet unknown to the scientists of the world? . . . Our way became lighter and lighter. The white light shone from the top of a peak about 800 feet high. But this was only a reflection made by the water. The fire, the source of the mysterious light, was on the opposite side of the peak.

Along the stony paths that furrowed the floor of the Atlantic Captain Nemo pressed forward without hesitation. He was obviously familiar with the way and could not lose himself. I followed him with complete confidence. He appeared, walking before me, like a sea genie, and I was impressed by his tall figure like a black shadow on the luminous background of our horizon.

It was now one in the morning, and we had reached the lower slopes of the mountain . . . one hundred feet above us rose the summit of the peak. A few petrified bushes stood at fantastic angles around us. Fish rose in shoals under our feet, very much like birds startled out of long grass. The mountain was hollowed out in deep grottoes and bottomless holes, from which came terrible sounds. My blood froze when I saw enormous antennæ barring the way, or a dreadful claw snapping in the dark craters. Thousands of phosphorescent points shone in the obscurity; the eyes of giant crustaceans, standing up like halberdiers and moving their claws like metal clashing, or tremendous crabs, pointed like cannon on their carriages, and terrifying polyps, weaving their long tentacles like a nest of living snakes. . . . Captain Nemo, familiar with these horrible creatures, did not heed them. We had gained the first plateau, where further surprises were awaiting me. I saw picturesque ruins, plainly erected by man and not Nature. There were enormous mounds of cut stones, the silhouette of temples and castles, covered with flowering zoophytes, seaweed, and fucus, instead of ivy.

But what was this land engulfed by the sea? What people had erected these rocks like prehistoric dolmens? Where had Captain Nemo come to?¹

But it is impossible for M. Aronnax to ask questions of his silent guide, and the captain, for his part, merely points

¹ Free translation.

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upward, indicating that they should climb still higher. After a few minutes the submarine mountaineers arrive at the final peak.

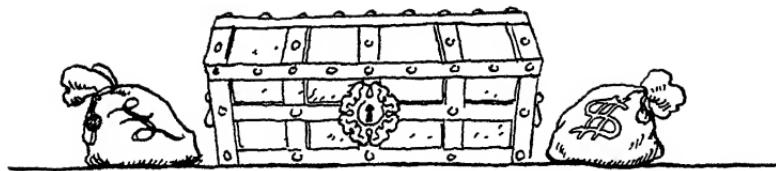
There before me stood a town, ruined, destroyed, its roofs fallen in, its temples hurled down, arches and columns broken, but with its Tuscan architecture still plainly visible. Beyond stood the remains of an enormous aqueduct, the encrusted plinth of an acropolis, and the shape of a Parthenon. There were vestiges of a quay, indicating the site of an ancient harbour, where merchant ships and war triremes would have anchored, and beyond this spread deserted streets, ruined walls—a second Pompeii inundated by the Atlantic.

Where was I? Where? I had to know at all costs. I had to speak, and tried to take off the globe of brass that imprisoned my head. But Captain Nemo came up to me and with a gesture stopped me. Picking up a lump of clay like stone, he walked to a black basaltic rock and on it traced the single word:

ATLANTIS

What a flash of enlightenment! Atlantis, the ancient Meropis of Theopompus, the Atlantis of Plato, the continent disbelieved in by Origen, Jambliehus, D'Anville, Malte-Brun, and Humboldt, who placed its disappearance among the legends credited as fact by Posidonius, Pliny, Ammianus, Marcellinus, Tertullian, Engel, Sherer, Tournefort, Buffon, and D'Avezac, was there before my eyes proving the reality of the cataclysm. . . . Such were the historical memories that Captain Nemo's inscription had awakened in me. Thus, led by the most curious adventure, I was treading one of the mountains of the lost continent. I touched with my own hands ruins contemporaneous with geological eras. . . . I was crushing under the heavy soles of my boots the skeletons of creatures of fabulous times, which these trees, now mineralized, once covered with their shade.





CHAPTER II

Golden Isles

IN the London *Daily Telegraph* for July 5, 1932, appeared a paragraph of news which, if true, ends the greatest treasure-hunt the world has ever known. Under the startling heading "Cocos Island Treasure: Reported Discovery," we who have followed the history of the numerous unsuccessful attempts to find it were amazed to read the following:

SAN FRANCISCO, Monday

Captain R. D. Adams, an orange-grower, of Lindsay, California, reports that the £12,000,000 treasure hidden on Cocos Island, in the Pacific, has been discovered. He states that the find has been made by an expedition headed by Colonel J. E. Leekie and Mr W. H. Clayton.

Captain Adams was a member of an expedition which left Vancouver in February to search for the treasure. The treasure, he states, was located by a 'metalophone,' an instrument described as an electrical divining-rod and invented by Mr Clayton. The location was only about thirty feet from the site of a camp of a previous expedition, in which Sir Malcolm Campbell, the holder of the world land-speed record, participated.

The Costa Rican Government, it is stated, gave the expedition protection and provided a guard until the treasure was removed.

Those who believed that the treasure would never be unearthed may have to readjust their theories, though we are bound to confess that since the news was published there has been no further reference to it—an omission that is hardly consistent with the report of a discovery of such

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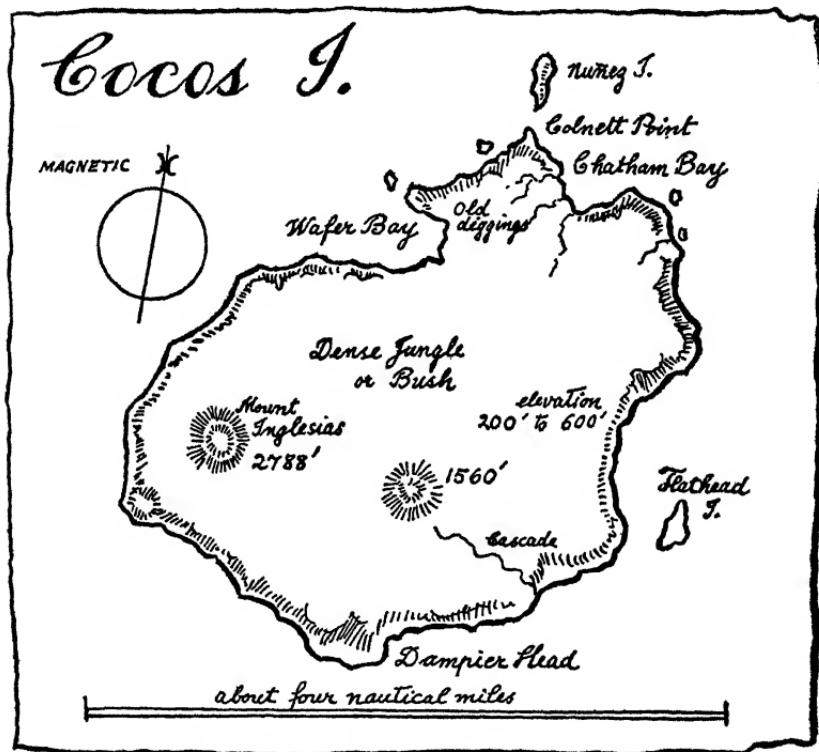
importance. However, this silence may be due to a very natural desire on the part of the discoverers to avoid the unwelcome attentions of begging-letter writers, news reporters, writ- and injunction-servers, and such unpleasant folk. For it is invariably the fate of those who have won a great fortune, no matter in what way, to have grasping and envious people disputing their right to it. In the summer of 1932 the Italian deep-sea treasure-hunters brought the *Artiglio* into Plymouth, carrying the golden fruits of years of heart-breaking labour (and incidentally at the cost of one ship and loss of her crew), only to be confronted with an order restraining them from assuming their share of the gold so doggedly won. This interference, an injunction nailed to the mast, and the lugubrious prospect of lawyers and legal arguments, with its unnecessary and wasteful expense, was instigated by an envious Frenchman, who, the moment the *Egypt's* gold was found, pounced on the finders with his writ, on a claim so fantastic as instantly to remind one of the libretto of *Trial by Jury*. At the time of writing the treasure brought up by the *Artiglio's* divers lies in the vaults in London—nobody's property—while the second act of the preposterous farce is waiting to be played.

Of all the reputed treasure isles—the Salvages, Oak Island, Tortuga, Madagascar, Trinidad—Cocos, a tiny green hump sticking out of the Pacific, four hundred miles west of the republic of Colombia, has been most popular with those romantic folk who believe in tales of buried treasure. Cocos Island has been lauded for its loveliness, described as a green jewel, an emerald on a turquoise sea, but no one has ever yet praised it for salubrity. For Cocos is not healthy to white men, and treasure-hunters have been as quickly defeated by its inhospitable climate as by the absence of adequate clues to the hiding-place of the gold. Most of the year it is an equatorial inferno of heat, and the insects and giant land-crabs make camping on its shores—so I am told by a member of the St George Expedition, who landed there

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in 1924—an experience remembered only for its unspeakable discomforts.

Physically the island can be quickly visualized. Irregular in shape and about four nautical miles long by roughly three broad, it appears from the sea rather like a lumpy, moss-covered rock, the 'moss' being irregular patches of trees on



the parched hills. Above the island proper rise twin peaks in steep cliffs of so far unscalable rock, one, Mount Inglesiess, to a height of 2788 feet and the other just over half this elevation. The centre of the island is covered with a dense jungle of small trees, and the coast is girt with precipitous cliffs interrupted by only two navigable bays, Wafer, to the west, and Chatham, to the north—both, it will be noticed, named after Englishmen, the former after Lionel

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Wafer,¹ who in a narrative of his voyages published in London in 1699 wrote, describing Cocos:

The middle of Cocos Island is a steep hill, surrounded with a plain declining to the sea. This plain is thick-set with coconut-trees; but what contributes greatly to the pleasure of the place is that a great many springs of clear and sweet water, rising to the top of the hill, are there gathered as in a deep large basin or pond, and the water having no channel, it overflows the verge of its basin in several places, and runs trickling down in pleasant streams. In some places of its overflowing, the rocky side of the hill being more perpendicular and hanging over the plain beneath, the water pours down in a cataract, so as to leave a dry space under the spout, and form a kind of arch of water. The freshness which the falling water gives the air in this hot climate makes this a delightful place.

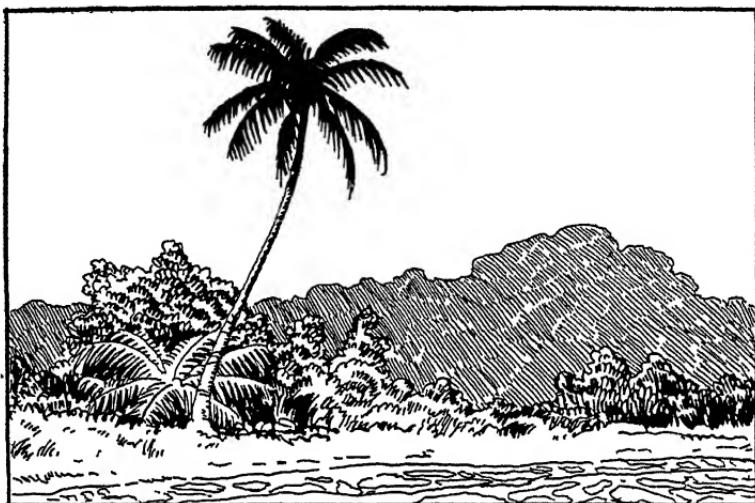
We did not spare the coconuts. One day some of our men being minded to make themselves merry went ashore and cut down a great many coconut-trees, from which they gathered the fruit and drew about twenty gallons of the milk. They then sat down and drank to the healths of the King and Queen, and drank in excessive quantity; yet it did not end in drunkenness; but this liquor so chilled and benumbed their nerves that they could neither go nor stand. Nor could they return on board without the help of those who had not partaken of the frolic, nor did they recover under four or five days' time.

As the chart shows, the two bays are divided by the headland terminating at Colnett Point. The principal treasure was said to lie buried by a creek which flows into Chatham Bay, but there were believed to be three other hoards, thus: (a) the loot from the sacked town of Leon, in Nicaragua, taken by Captain Edward Davis (partner of William Dampier) in 1685; (b) the largest treasure, the Lima hoard taken by Captain Thompson, the Scottish merchant captain, in 1821; and (c) the treasure of Thompson's partner in crime, that notorious cut-throat known as Benito Bonito of the Bloody Sword.

¹ Wafer was a companion of Dampier's, and held a berth as surgeon when not occupied in the more lucrative profession of buccaneering.

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Captain Davis, whose piratical heyday seems to have been between the years 1683 and 1702, was a quartermaster to Captain Cooke, fellow-privateer of the notorious couple Sharpe and Sawkins. Cooke captured a 36-gun Danish ship which, renamed, became the famous *Bachelor's Delight*, a vessel known to all students of maritime history. Cooke reached Juan Fernandez¹ in March 1684, where he shortly



WAFER BAY

afterwards died, leaving Davis to step into his berth as captain. He and a Captain Brown, of the ship *Nicholas*, raided the Peruvian and Chilean coasts, took many prizes, and sacked and burned the city of Paita. Sailing north, he put in at Chatham Bay, Cocos Island, for water and fresh fruit. The bay probably had no name, for Lionel Wafer simply refers to it as a bay on the north-east side. He makes no reference to the treasure, though the island is described minutely. Davis left these waters and returned home by way of the Horn, richer by fifty thousand pieces-of-eight and a vast quantity of jewels and plate. After some years ashore he returned to the Pacific, and had considerable

¹ See Chapter IX.

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success sacking Spanish towns on the west coast. If he left any treasure on Cocos it must have been at this time. However, the evidence is too scanty and apocryphal to take very seriously.

But now we come to history of a more concrete and trustworthy sort. In 1821 Bolivar the Liberator (*El Libertador*) was marching on Peru, and the fall of the capital, Lima, a rich city, was a matter of days. The defenders, in a forlorn hope, were putting up earthworks and looking to the priming of their muskets, but the Governor and the Archbishop, knowing the futility of such efforts, decided to entrust the civil and ecclesiastical treasure—said to amount to some twelve million dollars¹—to a certain British captain, named Thompson, in command of a trim little brig lying in the harbour. What better place for safety? And were not the British known for their honesty? And needs must when the devil drives, so the treasure was transferred to Captain Thompson's brig, which bore the quaintly felicitous name of *Mary Dear*.²

A long, slowly moving procession of mules and burros proceeded to the water-front, laden with chests of bullion and church plate, where it was loaded into boats and taken out to the brig. Among this collection was the fabulous golden Virgin and Child from the cathedral in Lima. With the treasure went a considerable company of the Lima aristocracy, including the Governor and the Archbishop, so it is said.

The details of what followed have never been known, for

¹ Some accounts put the figure in English pounds—twelve million pounds.

² Also spelled *Mary Dyer*



EL LIBERTADOR

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the guilty ones had every incentive to hold their tongues. Accounts differ, but the commonest and most widely credited tells how the wealthy and distinguished refugees—among whom were many lovely women—how they were conducted to their cabins, and how that night Captain Thompson and his men forced their way into the cabins, cut the throats of their helpless guests, stripped them, and flung the bodies overboard; and how the brig was taken to Cocos



Island and the anchor dropped in Chatham Bay, where for several days the crew were busy moving the heavy cases ashore and hiding them in a natural cave lying in a ravine hidden by heavy undergrowth. The list of treasure included 272 jewelled swords, chalices, crosses, patens, and the two golden images, bars of silver, and bags of pieces-of-eight. Some time after the taking on board of the treasure and its burial on the island Thompson had, either by accident or design, fallen in with Benito Bonito, and the pair must have sailed away from Cocos together, for it is definitely known that together they were chased and taken by the frigate *Espiegle* after a brief fight. Sooner than fall into the hands of the law Bonito shot himself, but Captain Thompson was taken alive. All but one of his men were summarily executed—probably strung at the yard-arm—but the captain and

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one seaman were spared on condition that they revealed the hiding-place of the loot. This rascally couple were landed on Cocos under heavy guard, but somehow contrived to escape into the jungle, where they successfully hid until their guards gave up searching and sailed away. Some weeks later the crew of an American whaler, putting in for water, found the two men alive, but in such a starved condition that the captain's companion died on board the following day. As for Captain Thompson, he eventually reached Newfoundland, where he lived for many years



unobtrusively, his sinister history unknown until just before his death, about 1844. In 1844 a man named Keating, a native of Newfoundland, while crossing as a passenger from England to St John's, met on board the ship a middle-aged man named Thompson. He is described as handsome, and a sailor by the cut of his jib. Keating and Thompson became friendly, and Thompson was invited to stay at Keating's home in St John's. And though he accepted the invitation he acted strangely, seemed furtive and anxious not to attract notice. But one evening he told Keating who he was, and doubtless made out a good case for himself, for his host agreed to join him in an expedition to return to Cocos for the treasure. To do this it was necessary to take into partnership a St John's shipowner, who was to fit out a suitable vessel. A certain Boag¹ was chosen as captain, but before the expedition sailed Thompson fell ill and died, albeit leaving his charts with the clues in the possession of Keating, who eventually sailed with Captain Boag. Arriving at the island, Keating and Boag rowed ashore, and, following

¹ Or Boig.

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the chart and directions, found the cave and the treasure without difficulty. Stuffing their pockets with small gold, they returned to the ship, agreeing not to divulge their success to the others, but to return the next day and collect secretly as much of the treasure as they could conveniently smuggle on board. Alas! On the ship their manner betrayed them, and the crew went ashore the next morning, determined to find the treasure for themselves. All day they searched the shore and the ravines in the burning sun without results. Returning to the ship, they threatened to kill the two leaders if they did not at once reveal the position of the gold. To save their lives the two rogues gave their solemn promise to lead the men to the spot on the morrow, but in the night they treacherously escaped ashore and hid in the jungle. On discovering their absence at daylight the furious crew went ashore heavily armed to search for the delinquents. All through the day they scoured the hills and jungle, shouting threats and offering immunity for surrender, but without avail. The precious rascals kept well hidden for a day or so, until, like the search-parties of the *Espiègle* many years before, the crew gave up the hunt and departed from the accursed island, leaving Boag and Keating with the sea-birds and land-crabs. The ship was afterwards wrecked and lost. Months later a whaler's crew, putting in at the island, found a starved man on the beach. This was Keating, who was taken off without revealing his story. Later he gave it out that Boag was drowned when escaping from the ship—the weight of the gold in his pockets had sunk him—but many believed that Keating had murdered him ashore. Whether or no does not now matter. Keating worked his passage back to Newfoundland, where he once more won the interest of shipping people to equip another expedition in search of the treasure. But a mutiny occurred on board the new vessel, and Cocos Island was never touched. Once more back in the North Atlantic, Keating continued to sail in blue water until 1867, when he was wrecked and

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gave up the sea. He was now an old man and in poverty, being worse off than in those evil days when he had tried to rob his shipmates of their dues. Lying in a damp hovel, ill and hungry, he was found by a certain sailor named Nicholas Fitzgerald, who took him home, but, in spite of the nursing and simple comforts Fitzgerald could offer, the old pirate died. His passing was slow, and he had ample time to reflect upon his past life, and it may have been remorse, though more likely gratitude, that prompted him to divulge his secret to Fitzgerald, and turn over to him the chart and clues that had once been the property of Captain Thompson.

Two years after Keating's death—that is to say, in 1870—Fitzgerald figured in a shipwreck while cod-fishing, and was saved from drowning by the seamanship of the Hon. Curzon Howe, then in command of a Government patrol in those waters. Fitzgerald never forgot the fact that the naval officer had saved his humble carcass, and twenty-four years later, while lying ill himself, he wrote Curzon Howe a letter telling him something of the Cocos treasure. For twenty-six years he had lived in hopes of taking out an expedition himself, but, with the lack of enterprise and sort, of dumb resignation of the unimaginative, he had done nothing, and now it was too late. The commodore was impressed by Fitzgerald's letter, but, being occupied on more urgent matters, put the letter and maps in a bank, where they were discovered after he had died. His son, who was still, I believe, in the Navy, kept them, hoping that some day the opportunity would arrive when he could prove the worth or not of the faded old clues.

We must not leave the impression that Nicholas Fitzgerald was the only man with knowledge of the Cocos treasure, for the story, with variations, seems to have been known by several people, and expeditions had gone to Cocos before his letter was written. The truth is there is no getting at the truth of this involved narrative. In 1888

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a German adventurer named Gissler obtained a grant of land on Cocos from the Costa Rican Government, to whom the island belongs. Gissler, of whom more presently, lived there for sixteen years, a bearded patriarch, not unnaturally resenting the noisy and quarrelsome treasure-hunters that from time to time disturbed the peace of his island home.

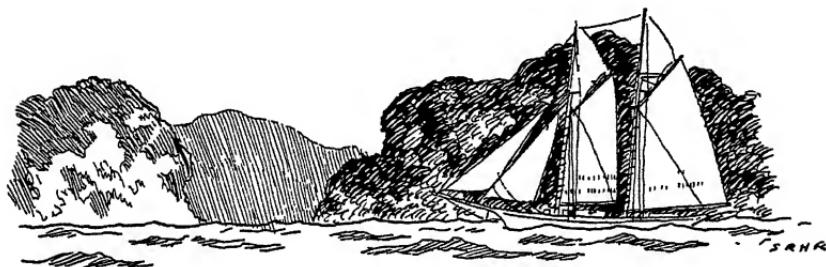
In 1892 a certain Von Bremer wasted most of his private fortune excavating, including a long tunnel, in search of the treasure.

In 1896 Captain Shrapnel, R.N., of H.M.S. *Haughty* (what names!), while in the Pacific dropped anchor in Wafer Bay, and on his own responsibility landed a party of three hundred sailors and marines, with picks, shovels, and gunpowder. While they had no success they worked with such zest, digging, tunnelling, and blasting the hillsides, that they may, by burying the original tunnel entrance, have rendered the task of future expeditions more difficult than ever. On his return Captain Shrapnel was officially rebuked by the Admiralty, and in consequence Cocos was thereafter taboo to the Navy. The account of the *Haughty*'s call at the island got into American newspapers, and so came to the notice of old Nick Fitzgerald. Thus, according to one report, the old sailor at once wrote Captain Shrapnel, requesting information concerning the topography of Cocos in the neighbourhood of Wafer Bay. Fitzgerald's letter aroused the curiosity of the captain, who needed little encouragement, and he got the whole story out of the old man. Among other things he was told to climb along the bed of a dried-up watercourse (running into Chatham Bay) for seventy paces west by south, from which point would be seen a gap in the hills. He must look out for a smooth-faced rock into which was sunk a hole about the height of a man's shoulder. By inserting an iron bar into the hole and levering the rock from its position the entrance to a cave would be uncovered —the cave containing the Lima treasure. Some years later

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Captain Shrapnel returned to Cocos to search with the aid of Fitzgerald's clues, but his efforts showed no tangible results.

In 1894 a small vessel called *Aurora*, under a certain Captain Hackett, with Keating's second wife and five other captains on board—partners in the venture—sailed from Vancouver to Cocos, where they arrived after a difficult passage of forty-three days. Needless to say, they returned empty-handed. Captain Hackett took out another expedi-



tion eight years later in a British Columbian brigantine named *Blakely*, but with no better fortune. In 1898 the famous Captain Voss, who afterwards made the most remarkable small-boat circumnavigation of the world, went out with two companions in the 10-ton sloop *Xora*. Captain Voss's description of the island, and particularly of Gissler, whom he met there, is an amusingly trenchant piece of writing.

In December 1904 Lord Fitzwilliam and a party of gentlemen adventurers landed from his lordship's luxury yacht and began digging in a somewhat aimless manner when they fell foul of another party, also digging. The second expedition, under one Arnold Gray, shared with Fitzwilliam's men a mutual distaste for each other's activities, and the two camps were soon quarrelling. After a sort of stone-slinging and pick-and-shovel battle they drew apart to nurse their hurts, and further trouble was averted by one of the parties sailing away.

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To return for a moment to Fitzgerald. From what I can see he wrote to several naval officers, acquainting them of his possession of the clues and chart and soliciting a partnership. Captain Shrapnel made inquiries for Fitzgerald's credentials and, feeling satisfied with what he heard, guaranteed him 5 per cent. of anything found. In May 1903, when no longer answerable to the Admiralty, he formed one of a party of Englishmen who had obtained permission from the Costa Rican Government to prosecute a two years' search on Cocos. Permission had been granted with the condition that the Government should receive one half of any treasure found. There were four gentlemen: Captain Shrapnel, Hervey de Montmorency, and two others. They met secretly in Mexico City, and joined their ship at the Costa Rican port of Salina Cruz, letting it be thought that they were off on a trading voyage. Arriving in the course of time at Cocos Island, they took their gear ashore and set to work. For days they dug in the terrible heat, and were at last rewarded by finding a piece of silver and the broken arm of a crucifix in the bed of a stream. Encouraged, they worked themselves sick under the vertical sun, but found nothing more, and finally, like all their predecessors, retired from the scene of their fruitless labour, and sailed away poorer but wiser men. But were they poorer? Is it not perhaps a little presumptuous to think so? Have not all these treasure-hunters returned immeasurably the richer by experience? Hervey de Montmorency afterwards wrote a book about this expedition, and I believe that he and his companions regarded the voyage in this philosophical light, regretting nothing. The same may be said of Lee Guinness and Sir Malcolm Campbell, who attempted to find the treasure at a more recent date.

Gissler, the German, who went there to live in 1888 with his wife and a peon, was taken off at his own request in 1903 by Captain Shrapnel's party and landed at Costa Rica, where we hear no more of him. He stated that on first

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arriving at Cocos he had found indisputable traces of pirates having been there—rusty arms, and empty bottles, and in one place a flight of stone steps leading into an empty cave. He had also found a gold coin in the sand, a doubloon bearing the profile of Charles III of Spain and the date 1788.

He took out with him a horse, a mule, a bull, and three cows, but members of the *Blakely* expedition, under Captain Hackett, slaughtered the latter for their meat. Goats were also taken, but these voracious and indiscriminating ruminants did more harm than good. Gissler, with extraordinary patience, had captured and domesticated a few wild pigs discovered on the hills. He grew coffee, cocoa, tobacco, manioc, vines, oranges, bananas, limes, pineapples, sweet potatoes, and coconut-palms, but, getting old, the work became too much for him, and when Captain Shrapnel arrived in 1903 he was glad to take his wife and a few possessions and leave the island that had been his home for so many years.



The sequel to the letter written by Nick Fitzgerald to Commodore Curzon Howe is divulged in Sir Malcolm Campbell's account of his voyage to Cocos Island in 1926.¹ The commodore himself, as already stated, never made use of the letter and maps he received from Fitzgerald, but put them in a bank, and when he died they came into the possession of his son, also in the Navy. The latter had, while on station in the Pacific, been quite close to the island, but had not obtained permission to visit it. When, in 1926, he heard that K. Lee Guinness was just on the point of sailing for Cocos on a treasure-hunt in his yacht *Adventuress* he got in touch with him, and at the eleventh hour delivered the

¹ *My Greatest Adventure* (Thornton Butterworth).

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sealed envelope containing the chart and clues to Campbell at Southampton. The party consisted of five gentlemen adventurers and the crew.

Campbell afterwards described the island as an eerie place, and frankly confessed to a reluctance to spend a night on shore alone. Many sailors believed it to be haunted by evil spirits: there was an uncanny sensation of things unseen, of shadows and strange sounds at nightfall, as though haunted by the ghosts of the many tragedies that have occurred there. Physically all treasure-hunters on its shores have been tormented by the huge insects, centipedes, enormous grasshoppers, spiders, beetles, ants, lizards, and cannibal crabs that will eat human flesh, not to speak of the ovenlike heat during the day. The last place on earth to carry on such arduous labour as digging.

My friend Mr William Stilwell, to whom I owe much valuable first-hand information concerning Cocos Island, had long ago described the discomforts of living on the beach at Wafer Bay, a description that is amply verified by Sir Malcolm Campbell's own experience.

Cocos Island, the Salvages, and Trinidad have been so much written about that their histories are almost universally known, and it has seemed strange to me that Oak Island, Nova Scotia, has not enjoyed (or suffered) equal publicity. For here is one of the most attractive and alluring treasure mysteries that has ever tantalized the hearts and minds of men.

Oak Island is a small green isle lying off the mouth of Fox Harbour, Cumberland County, in Northumberland Strait, Nova Scotia, and about six miles from the town of Wallace. The nearest post-office is Fox Harbour Point. The island is a resort for hunting wildfowl, geese, ducks, and brant, and it possesses, I believe, one or two lobster factories. So much for its physical and geographical character.

In the year 1795, when it was still an unfrequented isle, three youths, named Vaughan, McGinnis, and Smith, landed

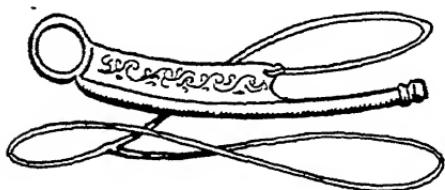
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there, in a cove at the head of a deep bight called Mahone Bay, for a picnic and fishing expedition. No one knew much about the island, and so far as the mainlanders were aware it was still virgin territory. Wandering through the woods curiously, as youth will, they came into a clearing covered with young ferns and small trees, as though at one time the clearing had been made by men with axes. Furthermore, they immediately noticed, rising from the centre of the clearing, a tall oak standing alone. One of the larger branches of this oak had been sawn off, leaving a thick stump, the bark of which was deeply rutted, as though the stump had been used for the purpose of a derrick arm. The ruts were plainly made by a rope or chain passing round the amputated branch. Examining further, the young men noticed that beneath the improvised derrick arm the turf showed a distinct circular depression, sunk a few inches below the general level of the ground and perhaps ten feet in diameter. This obviously suggested the conclusion that a large hole had been dug and filled in, the filling earth having afterwards settled down, leaving the depression. But why should anyone want to dig such a large hole in such an out-of-the-way spot, and if so what did they put in it? It did not resemble a grave. By the deeply notched stump it looked as though whatever had been lowered into the hole had been uncommonly heavy.

Leaving the oak-tree and mysterious circular depression for the time being, the three young men, their curiosity now so thoroughly awake that all thoughts of fishing were forgotten, explored farther, and presently found a large, corroded iron ring driven into a rock by the seashore, and obviously used for fastening a boat. Searching farther, they were rewarded by finding an old, badly tarnished bosun's whistle and a copper coin bearing the date 1713. As it was now getting late they decided to leave and say nothing to anyone of what they had seen, but return as soon as possible with picks and shovels to dig up whatever lay buried beneath

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the oak-tree. A few days later they were back again with what rough implements they could obtain, and at once attacked the mysterious depression in the clearing. Keeping within the bounds of the ten-foot circle, they quickly came to evidence of shovel marks on the walls of the circular shaft still plainly seen. But all day they dug and found nothing.



Then, when the hole was ten feet down and a rough ladder had to be climbed to get in and out, an obstacle was reached in the shape of a floor of heavy oak planking. All the

earth round the sides had to be passed up in buckets before the planks could be removed, a work expedited by the anticipatory excitement of the toilers. But, instead of treasure, the laborious removal of planks only disclosed more earth. Attacking this eagerly, the diggers slowly worked down through another ten feet of earth, when they were again checked by a floor of heavy timber. They were now twenty feet down, and passing up the dirt, not to speak of ascending and descending themselves, was becoming quite a problem. But, encouraged by the sight of these platforms beneath the ground, they tore up the planks, only to find more earth immediately beneath. Again they continued to dig, albeit with almost insuperable difficulties, until they came to another and third platform at exactly thirty feet. At this level they were forced to abandon the work for lack of machinery and hoisting gear. Thereupon they decided to disclose their secret and ask the farmers on the coast for help, but the superstitious and illiterate settlers would have nothing to do with the place, avowing that it was haunted by the headless ghost of a pirate who appeared after dark, and was accompanied by ghostly flames which danced along the foreshore like a human being. People had heard weird cries and the sound of ghostly voices. They even opposed

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the continuation of the work, and so vigorously that the youths were forced to give up any further attempt to uncover the supposed treasure.

Some years afterwards a young physician named Lynds, from Truro, Nova Scotia, got to hear of the discovery on Oak Island, and got in touch with one or all of the original discoverers. The doctor's interest awakened their desire to return to the old pit, and a company was formed, in which most of the local bigwigs were induced to invest money for buying suitable drilling machinery and hoisting apparatus. Among the principal shareholders were a colonel, a captain, and the sheriff, a point to note, since it at once lifts the venture out of the realm of hare-brained schemes to a solid *bourgeois* business proposition.

When the digging was resumed a shaft ninety-five feet deep was sunk, and at every ten feet or so a heavy platform was encountered and lifted out. One of these 'platforms' was more properly a floor of putty (or clay), and quite soft, owing to the moisture of the surrounding earth. Farther down a layer of charcoal over a layer of coconut fibre was encountered. The coconut fibre suggests the South Seas and buccaneers. At a depth of ninety feet the diggers had unearthed a large slab of rock bearing a faintly incised inscription. The slab was examined and scrutinized from every side, until some began to imagine that they could read the inscription, and went so far as to assert that it said that two million or two and a half million pounds were buried ten feet below the stone. This stone, it is said, still exists in Halifax, where it serves for leather-beating in a bookbinder's shop. Most of the diggers could make nothing of the mysterious inscription, but, inspired by faith and the evidence of the platforms, they continued to burrow downward. Five feet farther down they came to another platform, a wooden one, but this marked the limit of their burrowing, for during the ensuing night the shaft filled with water to within twenty-five feet of the top. The water had

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obviously entered from below, and, as it was found to be salty, the inference was that by some means the bottom of the shaft was close to a subterranean duct leading into the sea, and in digging they had come so near to the dividing wall that during the night it had collapsed and allowed the sea to enter.

Here was a pretty dilemma. The work of weeks lying buried under seventy feet of water! It was hopeless to attempt to pump it out, for, in spite of powerful pumps which were brought over to the island, the water drained in from below as fast as it was sucked out from above. The experiment of sinking a second shaft, to drain the first, was tried, but this filled, and so rapidly that the workers narrowly escaped being drowned before they could be hauled out. Disheartened, the shareholders abandoned the whole enterprise, and went back to their more prosaic callings, while the mysterious pit was left to the lone company of owls and ghosts. It was cynically referred to by the people of Truro and Halifax as the Money Pit, and for nearly fifty years remained undisturbed by fortune-hunters.

But hope had never died in the hearts of at least two of the original seekers, and in 1849 Vaughan and Dr Lynds, now elderly and presumably sane and respectable citizens of the province, announced that they were forming another company to attack the Money Pit. In fifty years engineering science had advanced far, and with the latest appliances, including powerful pumping machinery, it was felt that success was assured, and the promoters had little difficulty in enlisting the support of similar adventurous spirits. Mine-boring machinery, suction pumps, and blasting powder were taken to Oak Island, and work begun. But the water proved unconquerable, and the engineers decided to use the large-diameter spiral boring tools, sounding, as it were, their way to the treasure. At ninety-eight feet the old wooden planking was struck. Piercing this, which was five or six inches of spruce, the boring bit dropped a foot, as though through

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an empty space, and then encountered hard oak planking. After this it appeared to go through some loose substance, and three small links of what looked like a watch-chain were brought to the surface. After this the tool entered about eight inches of oak, which was believed to be the bottom of the treasure chest and probably the top of another, as the tool now showed evidence of boring through some loose metal to a depth of two feet. After passing through several inches of oak and spruce the bit entered into clay to a depth of several feet without further result. By this it was judged that the limit of the shaft had been reached. Excitement was at fever heat, and the whole camp avowed their determination not to leave until the baffling water was conquered.

Another boring was tried with slightly different results. At ninety-eight feet the platform was reached; then the boring auger dropped a foot or two and encountered what was believed to be the side of a cask, as the side of the tool distinctly 'chattered' as it revolved against the unseen obstruction. When the bit was hauled up tiny splinters of wood which appeared to be oak were found adhering to the spirals of the tool, also a fibrous brown substance, probably coconut fibre. It became obvious that the treasure could never be got at until the shaft was drained, and to this end nearly twenty subsidiary shafts were sunk during the next year or two. Large quantities of blasting powder were used and costly machinery brought to the spot in an effort to locate and block up the subterranean tunnel to the sea, but all to no purpose. Further borings were made with a well-sinking drill which went down past the 150-feet mark and pierced a layer of cement covering another oak platform and several thicknesses of a softer wood and some soft metal, which at least demonstrated that the mysterious diggers of the original hole had gone down much farther than was at first thought.

But why bury the gold so deep? And how had the pirates,

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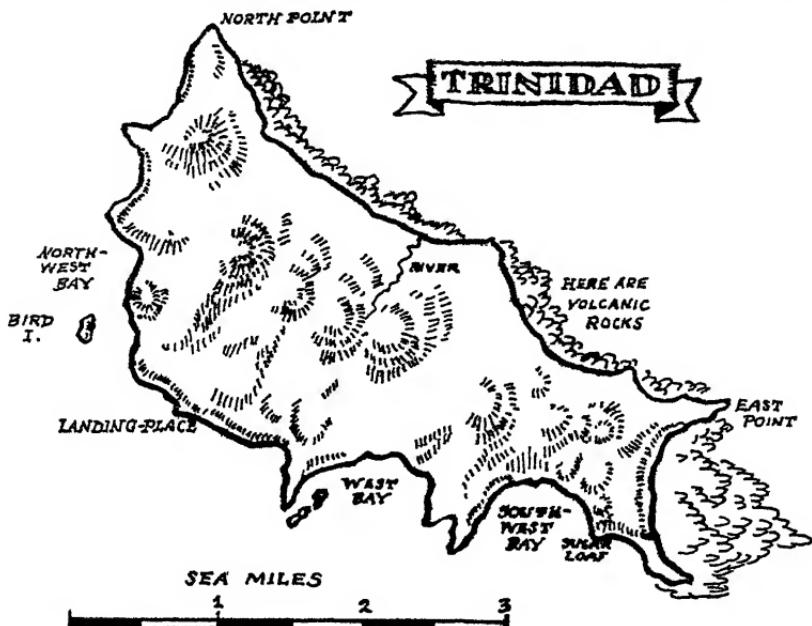
or whoever they were, contrived to excavate such a cavity and plug it up at intervals with such cunningly devised bulk-heads? And how had they contrived to connect it with the sea without being themselves drowned in the process? The more one thought of it the farther one got from a solution. Surely the mystery of the Oak Island treasure should rank high among the major puzzles of history!

Except for the three links, the only clue to the contents of the pit ever brought up was a scrap of parchment on which were written in barely decipherable letters V.I. or W.I. It was reasonably assumed that this formed part of an inventory of the contents of one of the chests.

A careful search along the beach for possible tunnels to the pit revealed, under a bed of broken stone, just below the surface of the water, a thick mat of fibrous stuff, which was thought to conceal the entrance to a shaft. A coffer-dam of timbers and rock was built round it preparatory to pumping it out, but the dam collapsed under pressure from the sea, and the plan was abandoned. The expedition departed, leaving the area of its labours littered with rusty and broken tools and gaping pits and mounds of excavated earth. For forty years the Money Pit was left alone, and the scars made by the former diggers became obliterated under a thick covering of ferns and grasses. Then in 1896 the beach again became busy with parties, landing gear, and camp equipment. A new company had been formed, in which many prominent citizens of Halifax and Truro held shares, and a great quantity of costly machinery was landed. Attempts were made to intercept the tunnel from the sea, and a ton or so of blasting powder was used, but all of no avail. Since then other companies have been formed to solve the mystery of Oak Island, but it remains a mystery still. Yet it is reasonably certain that the treasure exists and that some day it will be brought to the surface. Until then one can only weave fancies as to its value and why it was buried so deep.

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While on the subject of treasure isles I cannot forbear from referring to that weird island of Trinidad, 700 miles out in the Atlantic, opposite the coast of Brazil, and described by the great yachtsman E. F. Knight as "one of the most uncanny and dispiriting spots on earth." He visited the island in December 1881, and after a stay of nine days



departed, vowing that he would never set foot on its inhospitable shores again. But so strong is the lure of hidden gold that ten years later he was leading an expedition to the accursed isle. How treasure came to be hidden on Trinidad is pretty obvious, apart from the evidence of history. Here is a lonely isle well outside the usual shipping routes, and with such terrain, climate, and absence of landing facilities (including a dangerous lee shore) that it at once commended itself to those shady gentlemen who robbed the refugee Spanish royalists escaping from Bolivar's victorious forces while the going was good. Foreseeing the downfall of Old Spain's dominion in the Americas, her royalist supporters

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hurriedly gathered together their jewels and plate and escaped to sea in all manner of cranky and undermanned craft. This crazy treasure fleet fell easy victim to the roving cutpurses of the sea, who helped themselves and scuttled their victims' ships. This was in 1819, and the various accounts of the business resemble in essentials the history of the Cocos treasure, as though contemporary chroniclers had got the stories a trifle mixed. Sifting out irrelevant and contradictory matter, one can make out a story somewhat as follows.

The hastily formed treasure fleet was ill-equipped and badly organized and failed to keep in convoy (an elementary measure of precaution with pirates abroad), with the result that many vessels fell victims to the rovers. Now, according to popular legend—and one has to admit the 'plot' is an old one—all the pirates but one were killed by Government vessels after the treasure had been buried on the island of Trinidad. This one man, who had so fortunately, or unfortunately, escaped, shipped many years later as an A.B. on board an East Indiaman. He appeared, in bearing and intelligence, to be superior to his foremast shipmates, and rapidly won the respect and esteem of the captain, who had remarked his reserved manner and general air of culture. But while the ship lay at Bombay the mysterious sailor became ill and died, though not before he had given to the captain a piece of tarpaulin on which was drawn a chart of Trinidad with clues to the hiding-place of the Peruvian treasure left there many years before. What part the dying sailor had taken in the piratical enterprise was never discovered, but it was doubtless a prominent one. The hiding-place was marked at the foot of a mountain called the Sugar Loaf, in the south-west corner of the island, but the captain of the Indiaman did not regard the chart very seriously and put it away in his sea-chest, where it remained almost forgotten until he had swallowed the anchor and settled near Newcastle, in England. In 1880, however, his son visited

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the island with the old tarpaulin chart, but found the landing-place so perilous that he swam ashore rather than trust a boat among its treacherous reefs. After an eerie night there he returned to the ship, with the report that the plan agreed with the lay of the terrain, but that a landslide had covered the treasure with a mountain of earth and rock.

Five years later the barque *Aurora*, with a fully equipped treasure-hunting party, set out from South Shields bound for Trinidad. The attempt failed, though the party managed to make a hazardous landing with picks, shovels, tents, stores, and dynamite, and work for a time in the blistering heat, before leaving the island once more in the possession of its legions of huge land-crabs and stinging insects. Elsewhere I have described Trinidad¹ as

split and torn into dark ravines and jagged peaks of volcanic rock in all the lurid colours of the Brocken—a place of ill-omen, of evil spirits, and overrun by thousands of hideous land-crabs. Round the summits of the rocks and crags hung a cloud of vapour, such a cloud as might float over some inferno.

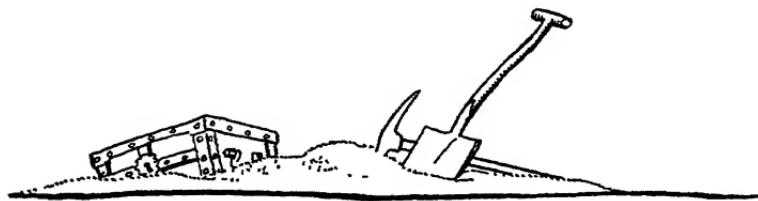
Mr E. F. Knight, who has left to literature one of the best treasure-hunting narratives outside the realm of fiction, has told, in his book *The Cruise of the "Alerte,"* of the hazards and physical obstacles to the realizing of their dreams. At a risk that only a sailor can fully appreciate the stores and gear were landed, and the little party began to dig. For three months these gentlemen adventurers persevered, removing a thousand tons of earth and rock from one place to another under the vertical rays of the sub-equatorial sun. Because of the perilous reefs the *Alerte* was kept anchored well off-shore, and once during the three months she made a voyage to Bahia for fresh stores and provisions. No treasure-seekers ever worked more doggedly and under worse conditions, but the climate finally defeated them, and with the coming of bad weather they were forced to pack

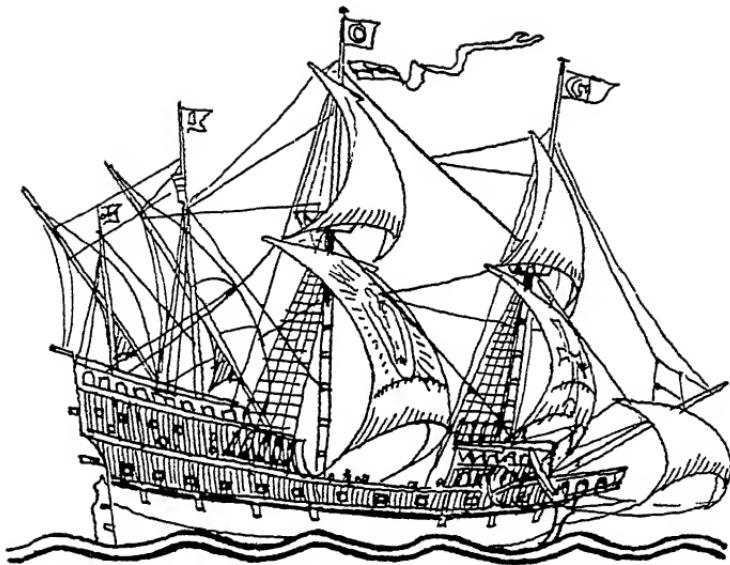
¹ *The Atlantic* (Harrap).

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up and go on board the *Alerte* before the winter's gales marooned them on the island.

It is the fashion to scoff at buried-treasure hunts, but does it greatly matter if they end in material failure? Such hopefulets never return empty-handed—they are always the richer for the experience. And they have added, I think, something to their stature, which is no bad thing whichever way you look at it.





CHAPTER III

A Northern Isle

IN my youth the only point of interest about the Scottish Hebrides was the curious names they bore—Uist, Rum, Canna, Staffa, Muck, Eigg, Coll, Jura, Ulva, Oronsay, Mull—names that lent themselves to crude schoolboy humour. Later, when I learned that Mull was associated with a romantic story of a treasure galleon of the Spanish Armada, this island at least became the object of awed respect—a respect shared to a lesser degree by the rest of the archipelago. For me the story of the sunken galleon raised Mull from oblivion to a hallowed place among the enchanted isles. I read everything I could find about the island, especially matter dealing with the galleon story itself. Then chance threw me into the company of Colonel Foss, one of the most persistent and optimistic of all those who have spent time and money trying to find the treasure supposed to lie within the hull of the wreck at the bottom of Tobermory Bay. Colonel Foss described his efforts at

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Tobermory and invited me 'up there,' as he called it, to see for myself. But it is a notorious fact that scriveners and limners are ever poor, and the last people to help finance a treasure-hunt expedition, however much they might enjoy doing so. But the old adventurer had sowed the seeds of desire within me, and it became impossible not to go 'up



MULL

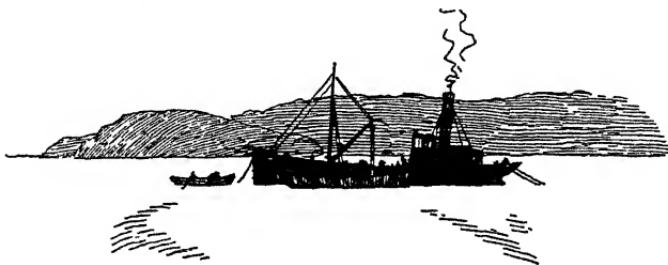
there' and see for myself. But this was in the following year, when the treasure expedition had packed up and gone home. However, the Spanish galleon was only a moiety of the attraction of Mull. Through books the isle had become a half-legendary country where every one spoke Gaelic. Plainly such a land could be seductive for its own sake, without the adventitious aid of a story of sunken treasure.

But if you are looking for languorous, lotus-eating enchantment it will hardly be found in the Scottish Hebrides. If, however, you are in a mood for the wild, grey romance of Gaelic folk-lore, the witches' heath, legends of giants, warlocks, glaistigs,¹ and grim clan feuds, here is the country to

¹ Women with fairy natures.

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your taste. I suppose it is only emphasizing the obvious to say that to feel the enchantment of Mull's grey mountains you must be in the mood for them. Though nowhere is this truism more applicable. For Mull does not pander to tourists and sensation-seekers—even the treasure-divers are gently smiled at by the islanders. In Tobermory and Salen, the only villages of any size (Tobermory has a population of eight hundred, and Salen greatly less), there are no *cafés*, tea-shops, or 'talkies.' If you arrive there hungry and desire

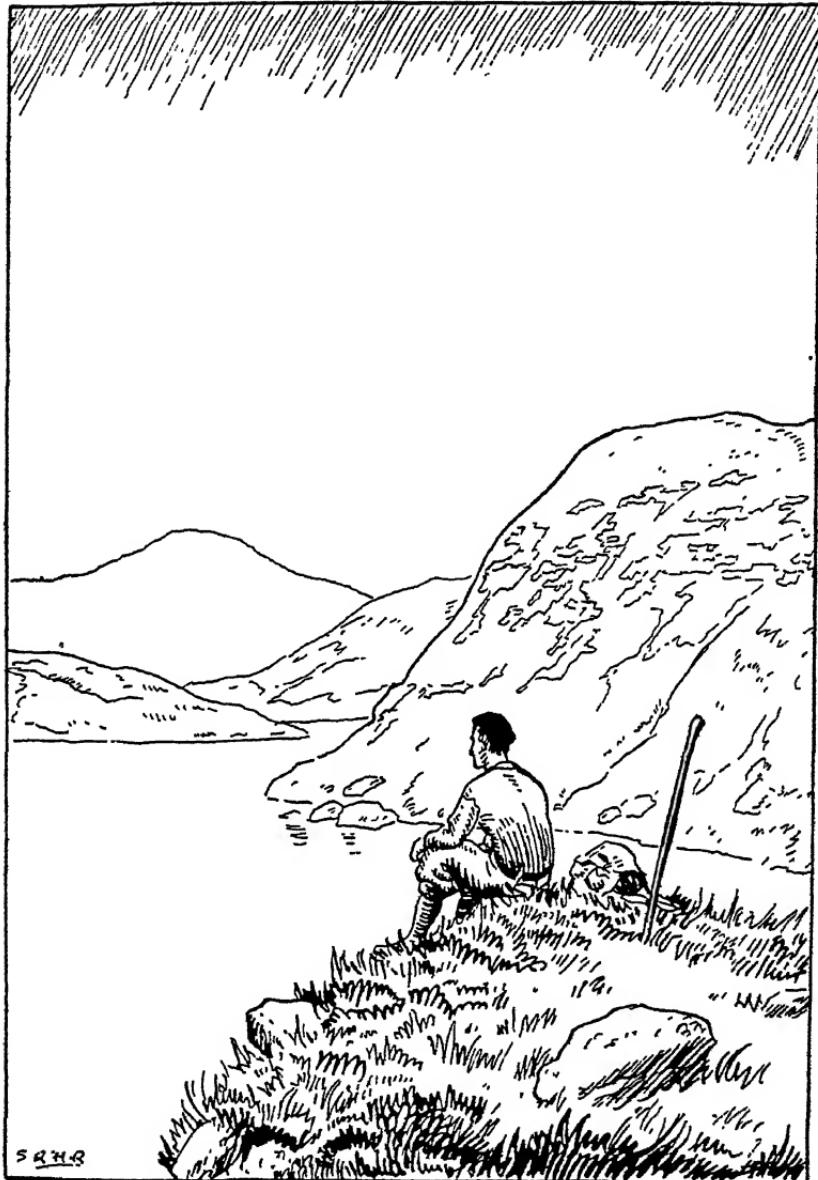


food you go to one of the two small hotels, the Mishnish or the Macdonald Arms, and take what they happen to have. There are no signboards advertising excursions (as at Oban, on the main), and they do not exploit the famous Tobermory galleon. That has been done for them by outsiders. It was with difficulty that I could get anyone to talk about the galleon. The spot where it lies on the harbour bottom is not marked by buoys, though you may, if you search the tiny shops facing the bay, find a postcard or two bearing a photograph of a diver about to descend, or of one of the dredgers that were used in the treasure expedition. Only by happy chance did I come across some one willing to discuss the galleon. At the Macdonald Arms, which I made my headquarters, the very amiable landlord, discovering that I had something to do with books, mentioned that he had had, two years before, a writer from London staying at his hotel; the name was Morton—"a nice man"—did I know him? "Are his initials H. V.?" I asked, and was instantly and beamingly assured that they were precisely

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those. The wife bustled into a back room and brought out a framed letter from this writer, a little souvenir of a happy visit among them, and a signed copy of one of his books. They were naïvely proud of their treasures, and the fact that I had some connexion with, to them, the race of demigods who wrote books at once established an *entente cordiale* that changed my status from that of customer to the more agreeable one of guest. I spoke of the galleon, and the son of the house, one of the finest-looking men I have ever seen and well over six feet tall, strode into the little private office and brought out an authentic piece of the wreck, a lump of intensely hard wood, tunnelled in one or two places by a boring worm. This 'living' reminder of the Invincible Armada was given to the family by the leader of one of the treasure-hunting expeditions. With reckless generosity I was pressed to accept a piece of the relic—it could be sawn in two, they assured me—and I had some difficulty in refusing. I mentioned the name of Lieutenant-Colonel K. M. Foss, saying that he was convinced that another effort would bring up the gold, as its position had already been accurately located, and they smiled as a mother smiles on a foolish child, and asked if I too was connected with one of the salvage ships. My reply was that I was far more interested in the island itself, on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Walk up one of the hills behind the town and take one of the roads leading inland over the moors, and within half an hour you are in another world. Listen to the country folk talking and you will hear Gaelic, a strange-sounding tongue to Sassenach ears. Look across the gorse-covered hills and mountains (gorse that the guide-books tell you is the habitat of adders) and you are reminded of Cornwall, but a wilder, lonelier Cornwall. You may walk for miles over the treeless hills without seeing a house or a living creature except the ubiquitous horned Highland sheep and a few birds, including, if you are lucky, the lordly eagle. Everywhere the



S.R.H.B

"THE MULL HIGHLANDS ARE SOFTLY ROUNDED"

ENCHANTED ISLES

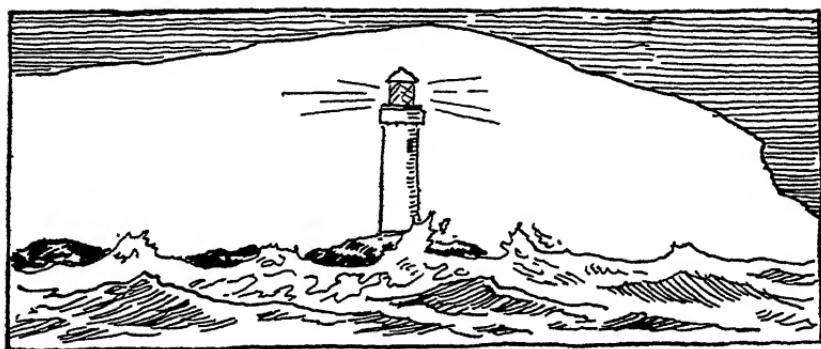
hills are streaked with the zigzagging channels of mountain streams, and the ground is soft and moist underfoot. The mountain-tops are more often than not hidden by swirling mists, not unlike volcanic vapours, and give to the landscape the appearance of a region fit for demons and witches and things occult. Such a picture might be inexpressibly gloomy were not the Mull Highlands softly rounded like the Devon moors. The physical character of Mull is not of the forbidding kind such as one sees in those awesome crags at the head of the Rhône Valley so well named the Diablerets. Ben More, over three thousand feet, and the highest peak, is a gently rounded boss, covered near to its summit with soft, spongy grass. One is constantly reminded of the nearness of the ocean by the presence of seagulls, a great nuisance to the island farmer. Here the gull is to the seeded furrow what the rook is elsewhere. One sees the incorrigible gulls competing with domestic fowls for the gastronomical attractions of a farmyard.

I believe that the traveller for pleasure should never visit a place without first knowing something about it, since a little pre-knowledge will greatly add to the pleasure of his sojourn there. Let this then be my apology for assuming no initial knowledge on the part of you, reader, and thrusting upon you a few physical and political facts concerning this northern island. It would be more fitting to be able to describe Mull as 'a lonely isle in the sea,' but unfortunately this is not so, for it lies, a large, irregular, mountainous shape, but a few miles off the Argyll coast, and is of more or less the same physical character as the Western Highlands. The principal town (or village) is Tobermory, a port lying at the northern extremity of the island, and may be approached from Oban, the nearest important jumping-off place on the mainland, either by the outer passage¹ or through the narrow sound of Mull, a matter of twenty miles by local steam-packet. Tobermory is a combination of the ancient

¹ The Atlantic Ocean.

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tober ('well') and *Mory* (*i.e.*, 'Mary')—thus the Well of Mary, or St Mary's Well. Of late years its solitudes have been invaded by most of the dubious benefits of civilization, and the Gaelic-speaking septuagenarian of Loch-na-Keal is quite familiar with the sewing-machine, the motor-car, and the wireless. About the only thing he does not have is the railway, but with the installation of the new hydro-electric



RU-NA-GAUL LIGHT

station at the falls above Tobermory the coming of an electric railway may not be far distant.

Mull is described as thirty miles long by twenty-five miles abroad, and possesses a coastline so deeply indented by the Lochs Scridain, na-Keal, Buy, Spelv, and Don that its shore extends some three hundred miles. It is essentially an island of mountains, which rise almost without exception from the sea. While there are trees in some of the valleys the highlands are treeless, and covered only by the tussocky grass and gorse. From the sea it appears a land of grass-covered mountain ranges veiled in chill mists, and deeply indented by silent lochs, without a sign of life anywhere except, perhaps, a few gulls and a tiny cottage on the hillside or by the deserted shore. But in these things lies its charm. The deep, shadowed bays and lonely mountain valleys, the purple moorlands, the lochs and tarns and waterfalls, the isolated cottages and unshepherded sheep are typically Hebridean.

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Very little of the land is cultivated, but the lush grass of the uplands makes excellent grazing for the black-faced sheep and shaggy Highland cattle so reminiscent of the once popular Academy paintings of Joseph Farquharson, R.A., whose red cattle standing in purple heather, and huddled group of sheep in a snowstorm, appealed to Victorian sentimentalism. In violent contrast to the bloody feuds of their



MULL

ancestors the country folk of Mull are a law-abiding people, and it occurs to me at the moment of writing that I never once set eyes on a policeman while there. Yet, as we shall see presently, there was a time when the history of Mull was soaked in the blood of the implacable clans, who carried on unceasing guerrilla warfare. Bloody Bay, a few miles to the north-west of Tobermory, was the scene of a massacre in 1493, when about fifty of the clan MacLean were smoked out of a cave, whither they had fled, and slain by their enemies as they rushed forth to escape suffocation. The cave is still known by its ancient name of the Cave of the Heads. This is but a sample of the sort of thing that went on when the island was in the hands of petty chiefs, before the clans were forced to take the oath of allegiance to William III in 1691.

That is one side of the story of Mull. Another and less sanguinary one is the folk-lore tales—half fiction, half fact.

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Like all primitive peoples, the islanders believed in giants, kelpies, glaistigs, and, of course, witches. Some of these stories are comically fantastic, but where the struggle for existence is hardest tragedy is never far away, and it is not surprising that most of the folk-tales are concerned more with tragedy than comedy. One of the best known is the legend connected with the curious basaltic rock at the foot of the cliffs on the shores of Loch-na-Keal, a rock known to the country folk as the Stone of the Couple. It is a vast black boulder, resting on what appears to be the lower courses of the broken walls of a cottage, and held upright by them. In the middle of the last century there was a maiden named Rona, daughter of a blacksmith and noted everywhere for her ethereal beauty. During her childhood she had been the constant playmate of a neighbouring crofter's son, a manly youth of serious mien named John. Boy and girl took each other and their sex for granted until John reached the age of adolescence, when he began to see Rona through different eyes. He would grow moody and difficult to please, though, if anything, his chivalry to his companion became more marked than before. Rona, he knew, was no longer a sister, and as her blossoming into womanhood approached she too became self-conscious and secretive, as though an impalpable wall had come between them. This state of affairs endured until John was nineteen, when there appeared in the hamlet where Rona lived a stranger, a tailor by trade and better-dressed and smoother-tongued than the simple crofters. His flashing appearance completely dazzled the people, and for a while it looked as if he would win the heart of the lovely Rona. The tailor spent many of the long winter evenings sitting by her side as she spun wool in her parents' cottage, while the quiet, sturdy John looked on miserably. He had never shown his feelings to her, and now, when he saw the prize being snatched from before his eyes, awoke to the urgency of his desire, and at the end of the winter declared his love, but not before he had told of

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his accepting employment as a shepherd at a near-by village, and how he hoped to save enough to build a cottage. Rona, who had for some time harboured tender emotions for the sturdy John, promised to wait for him and marry him when the money was earned for their little home. For two years she went about her work, faithful to the absent John, and at the end of that time, he having saved the few pounds necessary with which to start life in that simple community, the pair were formally betrothed with all the quaint ceremonies of local custom. The wedding was arranged to take place after the coming September harvest, and as the time drew near all the hamlet shared in the romance, for the couple were very popular wherever they went. But some spoke of evil omens and of seeing visions over the sea. John himself became uneasy, and confided to his intimates that he would feel happier when he was fast wedded to Rona. There was always the possibility that a witch might interfere at the last moment, for witches hated to see others happy. This was well known.

The summer had broken up, and signs of storms were in the air. John's mother had an evil dream in which she saw disaster over the heads of the betrothed couple, but the wedding took place without interference from the evil spirits, and John and Rona departed for the little home John had built by the shores of Loch-na-Keal. But before departing, being still uneasy in his mind, he had bent and asked his mother's blessing, and prayers for his bride's happiness. That night the cottagers were awakened by a terrible storm, which continued with unabated violence for twenty-four hours. The sea was lashed into a boiling cauldron on which no boat could live, and no one dare venture near the edge of the cliffs for fear of being whirled over by the fury of the gale. Then on the second day, when the tempest had died out, a neighbour called at the home of John's parents, and remained standing in the little room for some time without speaking. He was invited to be seated, but he

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remained standing, and they guessed that he had dark news for them. Quietly he told of how a great rock had fallen from the cliffs. "When did it fall?" John's father asked in a calm voice. "Some time during the night," replied the neighbour. And they knew that John and Rona had died in their marriage bed, and they asked no more. The whole countryside mourned, and a great company of people walked to the foot of the rock, while the bagpipes played a lament. And to this day the rock is known in Gaelic as Clach-na-Lancain—the Stone of the Couple.

After the recital of such a melancholy narrative it might well seem that Mull is wrapped in an atmosphere of unrelieved gloom. Enchanted it may be, but an enchantment of evil omen. Go there during a rainy season and the feeling is intensified. The peaty uplands are soggy underfoot, the mountains are lost in smoking mists, and the sky weeps unceasing rain. Hear what Dr Johnson thought of Mull. His opinions were bluntly spoken, and anything but reassuring. He saw only the bleakness of the country, the severe winters, and the poverty of the people. He remarks pessimistically on the abortive attempts at afforestation, and continues:

But where the climate is unkind, and the ground penurious, so that the most fruitful years produce only enough to maintain themselves; where life unimproved, and unadorned, fades into something little more than naked existence, and every one is busy himself, without any arts by which the pleasure of others may be increased; if to the daily burden of distress any additional weight be added, nothing remains but to despair and die. . . . It is natural, in traversing this gloom of desolation, to inquire whether something may not be done to give nature a more cheerful face, and whether those hills and muirs that afford health cannot, with a little care and labour, bear something better?

This was obviously true, but were not the conditions of the peasantry in the eighteenth century everywhere deplorable? In this year of grace matters are far different, and I suspect that islanders are often conscious of a feeling of superiority

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to the idle tourists who come to gape and depart little wiser than before. It is a waste of time to offer sympathy to simple folk who are contented on the land. And a little presumptuous, for are the dwellers in crowded cities any happier? But all this talk about the "gloom of desolation" is absurd if one compares the green highlands of Mull with the actual desolation of the more northern Hebrides. It is a matter of comparisons, and to a barefooted crofter from far-away Lewis, Mull would doubtless appear an altogether too pampered land, where the people wore boots and burned wood and coal in their hearths.

When, years ago, I read the Great Cham's sombre description of Mull I found myself making a mental note that here was a country to avoid. Later, while searching through State papers and miscellaneous literature connected with the lost galleon at Tobermory, I came upon a more flattering description of the island, and all the more interesting because it was written a hundred years before Dr Johnson toured the Hebrides.

Sir William Sacheverall, then governor of the Isle of Man, obtained a concession from the Duke of Argyll in 1672 to send divers to Tobermory Bay to search for the wreck of the galleon and share with the Duke any treasure found. Describing what he calls Tauber Murry Bay, Sir William wrote that for its size it was one of the best anchorages in the world, as it was protected from the sea by the isle called the Calf. It is still known by that name. He speaks of the high mountains that surround the harbour and their numerous waterfalls. Later he described a journey across the island to the famous St Columb's abbey on Iona, the little isle off the south-western extremity of Mull:

The first four miles we saw but few houses, but cross'd a wild desert country, with a pleasant mixture of woods and mountains. Every man and thing I met seemed a novelty. I thought myself entering upon a new scene of Nature, but Nature rough and unpolished in her undress. I observed the men to be large-bodied,

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stout, subtile, active, patient of cold and hunger.... The women seem to have the same sentiments as the men; tho' their habits were mean, and they had not our sort of breeding, yet in many of them there was a natural beauty, and a graceful modesty which never fails of attracting. The usual outward habit of both sexes is the Plaid; the women's much finer, the colours more lively, and the squares larger than the men's, and put me in mind of the ancient Picts. This serves them for a veil and covers both head and body. The men wear theirs after another manner; when designed for ornament it is loose and flowing, like the mantles our painters give their heroes. Their thighs are bare, with brawny muscles; a thin brogue on the foot, a short buskin of various colours on the leg, tied above the calf with a striped pair of garters. On each side of a large shot-pouch hangs a pistol and a dagger; a sound target on their backs, a blue bonnet on their heads, in one hand a broadsword, and a musket in the other.

Which brings me back to the treasure galleon whose history has become so irrevocably part of the story of Mull. There are those who scoff at the optimists who take dredging and diving gear to Tobermory, but no one challenges the main facts of the story, the presence of the galleon in the harbour and its destruction there by gunpowder. Lying deeply buried in the clay, under, I believe, sixteen fathoms of water, eighty-four yards from MacBrayne's steamer pier, is the wreck of a ship of the Spanish Armada, and scattered about Scotland, mostly in the possession of the family of Argyll, are many tangible relics of the vessel and its cargo.

The Invincible Armada, a noble fleet of over a hundred large ships, stood out to sea from Lisbon on the 20th day of May, 1588, bent on mischief on a gigantic scale. The principal men-of-war were the large square-rigged galleons with high-charged poops and heavy broadsides—unwieldy structures, impossible to sail close-hauled and cranky as a canoe in anything like a seaway. The galleon was the dreadnought of the fleet, a fat, bluff-bowed vessel (her length was only three times her beam), and capable of no better sailing than

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within five or six points of the wind. On a lee shore they were helpless, as the wild peasants of Ireland were to discover to their extreme gratification. The galleass was a lighter vessel, usually lateen-rigged—the frigate of the day. The galley—the *navis longa* of the Romans and a typical Mediterranean craft—was propelled by oars, and not really suitable for blue-water voyages. Her armament was a few bow-chasers and no broadsides, for her main weapon was the lethal ram in the bows.

The Armada also contained four squadrons of armed merchantmen, three of which were from the provinces of Biscay, Guipuzcoa, and Andalusia. The fourth was made up of light Levantine ships. There were also two squadrons of store ships and small auxiliary craft around 150 tons. In the first squadron (ten ships), under the Duke of Medina Sidonia, was the galleon *Florencia*, assumed for years to be the one lying at the bottom of Tobermory Bay. The *Florencia* was a vessel of 961 tons, and exceeded in size by only the flagship, *San Martin* (1000 tons), and the *Juan* (1050 tons). The fleet had got some way past Finisterre when bad weather forced the Duke to return with a number of ships to Corunna, where a month was spent in refitting. On July 12 the expedition was again ready for sea, and exactly one hundred ships stood out from the Spanish port. But the notorious Bay gave them an unfriendly reception, and four galleys were forced to return to Spain. However, the main fleet reached the Channel, and with what disastrous results the whole world was soon to learn. Eighty-nine ships escaped into the North Sea and up round the coast of Scotland. On August 2, when the main body of the Armada was a hundred miles east of the Firth of Forth, the English fleet abandoned the pursuit. At a conference of the Spanish leaders on board the flagship it was decided to sail round Scotland into the Atlantic, and so to Spain. Proceeding northward, the fleet became scattered, owing partly to indifferent seamanship and partly to evil weather.

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The ship which was destined to end her days in the then remote bay of Tobermory ran into a storm on September 2 off Northern Ireland, and suffered a further battering a week later in another gale, which left her in such a sorry condition that her commander decided to run for shelter among the Hebrides. The ship arrived at Islay¹ on September 13. Now practically every account of the wandering galleon refers to her as the *Florencia* or some variation of that name, such as *Florence* or *Florida*, thus identifying her with the ship *Florencia* contributed to the Armada by the Duke of Florence. But it has been definitely proved that the *Florencia* returned safely to Spain. It is probable that she was the *San Juan Bautista* (*St John the Baptist*), of Ragusa. This from Spanish documentary evidence that need not be tarried over.

So far as I have discovered the earliest English reference to the galleon occurs in a letter dated Edinburgh, September 23, 1588, and sent by William Ashley, the English Ambassador, and almost certainly intended for Walsingham, the head of the English Secret Service. The letter may be seen by the curious in the Cotton MSS.,² and refers to the ship being "beaten with shote and wether." Six weeks later the Ambassador wrote again to London:

This 6 weeks on the (West Coast) of Scotland, a great ship of Spaigne about the Ile of Mula in MacLane's countrie, which thei here reporte cannot go from thence; those irishe people releave them with victell, but are not able to possess her, for she is well furnished both with shott and men; if there be anie shipes of warr in Ireland thei might have a great prae of this ship for she is thought to be verie riche.³

Spanish, French, English, and Scottish archives contain documents that refer to the mysterious ship, some contradictory to others, but there cannot be smoke without fire. Not long after Walsingham received this second secret letter

¹ One of the southernmost of the Hebrides

² Caligula, D.I., f. 297.

³ Cotton MSS., Caligula, D.I., f. 203 b. 231.

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the Spanish Ambassador in Paris heard through his spies that a number of Spaniards had been hanged on the Scottish island of Mull, and though this was later denied, it all pointed to some Spanish misfortune in that part of the world. Ashley again wrote to London:

The Spannishe shipe I mentioned in my Last, which driven by tempest to the west part of Scotland to the Isle caulled Mula in MacLane's countrie is burnt, as it is here reported by treacherie of the Irishe; and almost all the men within is consumed with fire; it is thought to be one of the principalle shippes, and one of great accompt within; for he was alwais, as thei saie, served in sylver.

Another letter, still in existence, dated Edinburgh, November 18, 1588, and from one Roger Aston to his brother, supplies us with details of the end of the galleon:

This daye word is come thatt the grett ship that lay in the West Isles is blown in, the eir be device of Jhon Smallett, most part of men are slain. The mauner is this Maclen entreteining grett friendship with them desirett the borrowing ii caunones and a hundredth hagbotteres to beseyge a house of Anggees Macanhales and delivered a fostores son of his as a pleg for the safe delivery of them againe in this mean tyme. Jhon Smallett a man that has grett trust among the Spagniardes entered the ship and cast in the powder roome a pese of lynnt and so departed within a shortt tyme after the linn toke fire and burnt shippe and men, whether this be true or not I am not sure, but soe his Majestie is informed.¹

Smallett (or Smollett), who may have been a Government agent for Ashley, writes Walsingham, informing him that the work has been done. In contemporary State papers in Madrid is further confirmation of the loss of a Spanish galleon in a Scottish port. In December the Lord Deputy of Ireland received instructions from London to send ships to Mull to destroy the galleon in refuge there. Apparently the Government did not know that the ship was already at the bottom of the sea. Walsingham had kept the informa-

¹ Cotton MSS., Caligula, D.I., f 232, and copied in the Harleian MSS.

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tion from the politicians. Owing to the difficulties of communication in the sixteenth century, the uncertainty of messengers ever arriving, it was not until a month later that the Government heard from Ireland news to the effect that the Spanish ship had been blown up by a French prisoner on board. On February 11 the official report reached the Privy Council. The vessel is described as a

gallion of Vennis: of 12,000 tonns . . . in which was twoe chiefe Captens burned, V [5] of M'Lanes pledges [hostages] and 700 souldiers and saylors, savinge twoe or three that were blowen on the shoare with the upper decke, so that nothing was saved that was in her at that instant, and what remained unburned is nowe sunke under water.¹

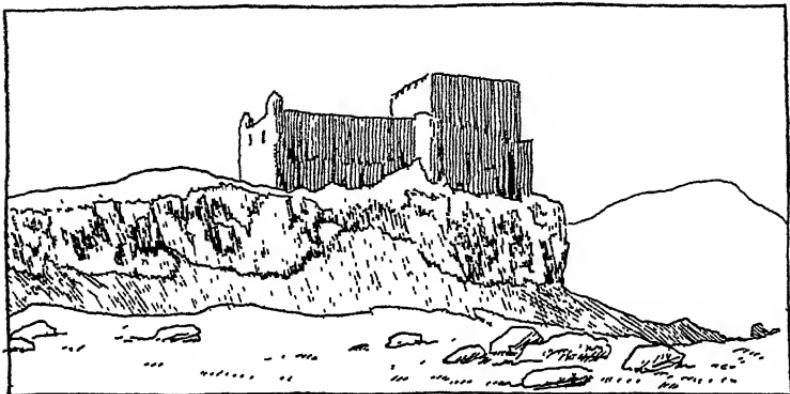
The Spaniard arrived at Tobermory Bay at a time when there was an unusually bitter feud between MacLane of Duart and MacDonald of Islay. Begun about ten years before, by 1588 most of the Western Isles had been drawn into the campaign of treachery, murder, and pillage. MacLane, of Duart Castle, being hard pressed, saw in the timely arrival of the Spaniards a useful ally if they could be persuaded to fight on his side. It so happened that the galleon's tanks and bread-room were well-nigh empty, and her captain, Don Fareija,² a hidalgo of Spain, had, with small respect for the 'barbarians' ashore, peremptorily demanded water and stores. But such high-handed demands merely resulted in a message from Lachlan MacLane, informing the unmannerly visitor that he would get nothing by such behaviour. The haughty Southerner now saw it the better part of wisdom to change his tune, offering to pay in gold for the necessary provisions. MacLane thereupon proposed a bargain—to wit, in return for certain supplies the Spanish commander should lend him a hundred soldiers to help him defend Duart Castle and trounce his enemies. This plan seems to have been agreed upon to the

¹ Irish State Papers.

² Also spelled Pereira.

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mutual satisfaction of the two leaders, the don getting his supplies, the chieftain seeing his enemies murdered and their homes burned. MacLane appears to have met with such success that in the following year we hear of him being denounced as a rebel and outlaw by the King for his campaign of murder and pillage among the neighbouring isles.



DUART CASTLE

In the spring of the year the Council at Edinburgh tried luring the wily chieftain to the city by offering him a free pardon, "except for his part in the destruction of the Spanish ship at Mull."

But to return to Don Fareija and the galleon. MacLane kept the Spanish soldiers such a time helping him kill his enemies that Fareija began to grow impatient and demanded the return of his men, as he was anxious to depart. These bleak shores offered poor diversion for a gentleman of Southern blood. Now comes MacLane with a reminder that there was a promise of gold along with the use of the soldiers, and when the gold is paid the troops shall be returned, but not before. On the don's word that the money shall be paid the chieftain returns the borrowed soldiers, keeping back as hostages three officers. The money still not forthcoming, a kinsman of Lachlan's, one Donald Glas

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MacLane, son of John Dubh MacLane, of Morven, is sent on board to collect the debt. But the young Northerner reckons without his Southern hosts, and finds himself rudely thrown into the lazaretto and securely locked in. Don Fareija now sends a message ashore that the young Donald will be released only when the three Spanish hostages are sent aboard. But life was cheap among the clansmen, and Lachlan MacLane refuses to discuss terms. Captain and chief remain equally immovable, and Fareija decides to sail rather than pay the gold and collect his three men. Now the scene is transferred to the lazaretto, where Lachlan's young kinsman sits in duress. The ignominy of being a prisoner is too great for his proud spirit to endure, and, having discovered that his prison is only separated by a thin bulkhead from the powder-room, he decides to make a hole through the partition and blow up the ship. The galleon is getting under way. He hears the creak of the capstan as the unwieldy cable is hauled aboard. He hears the cries of the men on deck and aloft, the rattle of blocks and the flapping of loosened canvas. Somehow he has contrived to get hold of a slow match, and, as his kinsmen on shore watch the sails of the great galleon fill as her sheets are hauled aft, the proud prisoner desperately lights the slow match and pushes it through into the magazine. While his kinsmen continue to stare from the foreshore and surrounding hills the stillness is torn open by a frightful detonation that makes the superstitious people believe that their hour of doom has come. Donald MacLane has avenged his clan at the cost of his own life.

That is the story, and it has been commonly accepted for centuries, nor do I see any good reason for denying it. Admittedly the official reports are less colourful, but then officialdom does not encourage what it might term frivolous irrelevancies. In his *History of the Church and State of Scotland* published by Archbishop Spottiswoode in 1655 the event is dealt with in two lines: "A ship of Florence driven

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upon the west Coast of Scotland was spoiled and set on fire by certain Highlanders."

Some of the islanders go further, and tell of a lovely Spanish noblewoman on board who was wooed and won by one of the MacLanes. Certainly those black-eyed and black-haired people among the Northerners point to Southern ancestry.

In 1641, fifty-three years after the galleon had sunk, the Crown deeded the wreck to the Earl of Argyll, and it has remained, in law, the property of the Argyll family ever since. About 1677 a document appeared naming the ship the *Admiral*, of Florence, and describing her as a ship of 56 guns and carrying 30,000,000 of money. This might be reals or dollars—certainly not pounds. In the Bodleian Library is a highly interesting document that makes the mysterious galleon a very real ship to us:

Informacion by Archbald Miller¹ (1683) . . . Anent the Ship sunck in Tippermorie in ye Sound of Mull. The ship's name is the *Florence* of Spaine. The Ship lies sunck off the Shoare about one finger stone cast, her Sterne lyes into the Shoare Norwest, and her head to the Southwest, shee lyes under ye water at ye deepest nine fathom at Low water, and twelve fathom at full Sea or High water.

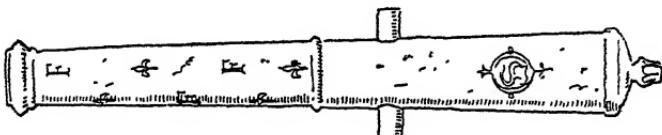
He proceeds to describe the wreck as having no deck except on the poop, and as being littered with a great heap of timbers. Through an open door in the stern he saw a number of dishes white-bluish in colour, which might be either plate or pewter. One great gun stood vertical, pointing its muzzle towards the surface, and amidships lay three more guns among a quantity of cannon-shot. On the fo'c'sle lay a number of ballast stones and shot. Miller helped to raise a silver bell weighing four pounds, a great gun eleven and a half feet long, and with a bore of seven and a half inches. He also found a considerable number of smaller guns—minions, demi-culverins, falcons, and slings—lying

¹ A professional diver.

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at some distance from the wreck. In the list of recovered objects are three anchors, the measurements of which are exactly given. Then, quite as a matter of course, he speaks of fishing up a paper in Latin which records that there were thirty millions (?) under the sills in the gun-room. He writes:

The properest time to Dive is to begin about ye twentieth of May, and continue untill the midst of August. I found a Crowne or Diadem and had hooked the same, but being chained, it fell among the Timbers. This Crowne is also in ye Spanish Records. I thinck the Goods of ye Ship may be recovered provided the Timber could be taken away.



Miller made a number of descents, and spent several weeks working over the wreck, but had finally to depart owing to lack of funds and of adequate gear. Diving dress was then unknown, but the diving-bell had proved of practical use.

Other adventurers and engineers tried their hand at recovering the treasure from time to time, and the wreck became so well known that it is frequently seen referred to in contemporary print. In the novel *Humphry Clinker* (1771) it appears, the author calling the ship the conventional *Florida*.

Sir William Sacheverall, whom we have already noticed, and who investigated the wreck in 1672, quaintly wrote:

Italy itself, with all the assistance of Art, can hardly afford anything more beautiful and diverting; especially when the weather was clear and serene, to see the Divers sinking three-score foot under water and stay sometimes above an hour, and at last returning with the spoils of the Ocean; whether it were Plate, or Mondy, it convinced us of the Riches and splendour of the once thought Invincible Armada.

In 1665 the ninth Earl of Argyll, son of him who had obtained ownership of the wreck from the Crown, sent an

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expert diver named James Mauld, with a cumbersome diving-bell, to search the wreck. Mauld was given safe conduct in those wild parts for a period of three years, and guaranteed lodgings for himself and his assistants. The wreck was found without difficulty, and charts were made of its bearings. This ancient scrap of paper has since been often consulted by those seeking the treasure. Mauld worked there for three months, and abandoned the search after bringing up a number of guns.

The subsequent history of the wreck is a series of spasmodic efforts on the part of the Argyll family or outside speculators to find the treasure. Many relics have been brought up, much of which anyone can see who cares to take the trouble, but little of value has been found, least of all the reputed thirty millions. In former days the divers and their assistants were seriously interfered with by the clan MacLane. Lachlan's descendants apparently had not forgotten the Spaniards' unpaid debt, and desired to collect what in their savage hearts they truly felt was their own. A certain Hector MacLane repeatedly drove the divers from the wreck and built a small fort overlooking the spot where the galleon lay buried. The ruins of this fort still exist. For years the belligerent chieftains challenged the great Argyll's right to the wreck. What with fierce quarrels among themselves and grievances against their overlord, the Duke, the island clans were kept busy. To-day the relatives of those ancient enemies keep house and shop amicably enough, side by side, in Tobermory.

In the year 1740 the then Duke of Argyll employed divers, who recovered a large bronze cannon, still preserved at Inveraray Castle. It is similar in size to the one found by Archibald Miller, but of particular interest, as it was wrought at Fontainebleau for François I by that Florentine genius Benvenuto Cellini, whose memoirs make such entralling reading.

During the 1740 effort the divers, who used the crude

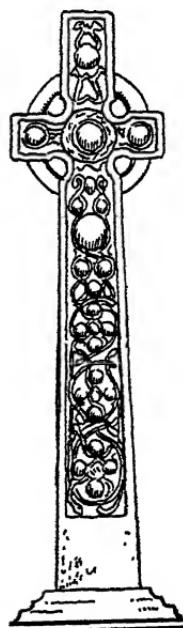
A NORTHERN ISLE

diving-bells of the time, capable of descending at the most seventy feet, brought up a number of gold and silver coins. After that no more attempts were made for over a hundred years. In the eighteen-seventies the Marquis of Lorne, son of the Duke of Argyll, sent down a diver who succeeded in finding a few coins, timbers, and pieces of heavily encrusted metal. In 1903, 315 years after the galleon had gone to the bottom, a Glasgow company sent an expedition under the direction of a Captain Burns, with the latest type of dredger, submarine lamps, etc. During the first season a few corroded swords, stone balls, arquebuses, bronze cannon, and about fifty doubloons bearing the name of Ferdinand and Isabella and Don Carlos were brought to the surface. In 1905, with still more elaborate equipment and powerful lamps, attempts were made to photograph the bottom of the bay itself. A mound of clay or sand was revealed, and, on digging into it, a number of small coins, pike-blades, copper powder-pans, and shot, all badly corroded, were discovered. Powerful pumps sucked at the mound for several weeks and brought up a few more relics, including a heavy silver candlestick, but, oddly enough, the ship herself was not found. During 1906 over eight acres of the bay were probed and dredged from six to fourteen fathoms, diviners with hazel-twigs being enlisted in the search. Several pieces of plate were said to have been found that year. The five-year concession expired the following year without anything further of importance being found. This brings the history of the search to the expedition formed by a London group under Lieutenant-Colonel K. M. Foss, whom I last heard from at Richmond, in Surrey, still bravely hoping that he might be spared to make a further attempt on the elusive treasure of Tobermory. If the lost galleon has overshadowed in importance the island itself it has, on the other hand, been instrumental in giving to that modest country a place in the sun. It may be, however, that I exaggerate, for should not Iona, that sacred islet off the

ENCHANTED ISLES

Ross of Mull, take the credit (though she would scorn such a cheap reward) for making Mull one of the chosen places of the earth?

Iona—Inchcolm Kill, the Isle of the Cell of Columba, “the Blessed Isle”—is still a place of pilgrimage, but her pilgrims are mostly souvenir-seeking tourists who hurriedly



disembark from the Oban steamer, do the sights, and as hurriedly embark and away to Bumbledom once more. In a burst of candour, I confess to not having been to Iona, so I only write from hearsay, for the mass invasion of the saint's isle rather kills the desire to go. Though doubtless it is better that as many mortals as possible should see the inspiring places of this earth, rather than that they should be preserved for the selfish few. At least, that is the altruistic ideal, though some of us prefer to enjoy these things undisturbed by the amiable platitudes of the followers of Herr Baedeker, or his Scottish counterpart. This, I know, is unkind, but it is depressingly true. Witness, for example, the orchestra on board the Staffa and Iona tourist steamer. Is one never to get away from the delights of civilization;

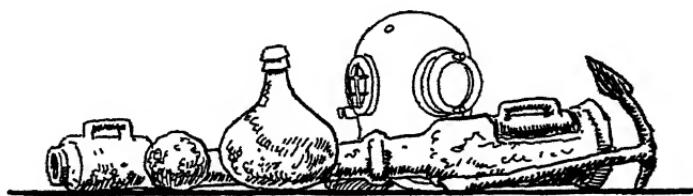
never to be allowed to commune with one's own soul? One sunny afternoon, in an idle hour, I watched the tourist steamer call in at Tobermory to pick up odd passengers for Oban, and was surprised to hear a modern dance air floating through the open ports as the steamer was warped into the little stone pier. As she approached closer passengers could be seen within the main saloon having tea, while a tiny orchestra beguiled their pampered souls with music. Can one wonder that the simple crofter regards himself at least the equal of these queer, insensitive folk?

But what of Iona, perhaps the most important isle in

A NORTHERN ISLE

Christendom—certainly in Northern Europe? Thirteen centuries ago Columba and his twelve evangels landed on its stony shore, and attracted to the island such renown that it became a place of pilgrimage comparable to Rome and Jerusalem. And this is all I intend to say of the Isle of the Cell of Columba, for I am only repeating the words of a guide-book.

Farther out in the Atlantic, some seven miles from Mull, lies the tiny isle of Staffa, one of the geological wonders of the world, and, like Iona, overrun, during the summer season, by tourists. So often have the curiously formed basalt pillars of Fingal's cave been photographed and described that it would be redundant to do more than refer to the phenomenon here, and that merely to satisfy a passion for omitting nothing. Some day, when the seas are grey and capped with white horses and the chill wind whines in the steamer's steel rigging, I shall hope to go to Staffa and Iona, if only to make good my omission.





CHAPTER IV

Loti's Isle

ON a certain day in the month of May 1871 a young officer in the French Navy, Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud, then twenty-one years of age and a curious combination of philosopher and philanderer, departed from Lorient in the dispatch-boat *Vaudreuil* for the South Seas. After a languorous dallying at Valparaiso he was transferred to the flagship, the frigate *Flore*, which left in December for a Polynesian cruise. Towards the end of January 1872 our young naval officer, not yet known to the world as Pierre Loti, first sighted the enchanted island of Tahiti, a place that was to be ever afterwards associated with his name.

Though a French protectorate since 1843, the island was still, nominally at least, governed by the native royal house, represented in Loti's day by the elderly Queen Pomare. Loti at once fell victim to the island's spell, and under its influence wrote one of the most haunting love-stories in all literature. It is a curious thing about Tahiti that it weaves a spell over white visitors such as to make

LOTI'S ISLE

them forget that they are of the superior Aryan race. Loti in openly consorting with the natives, was not merely showing once again the Gallic proclivity for coloured races, for all intelligent white travellers have felt this same breaking down of their ancient prejudices. One has only to think of Jack London, Robert Keable, George Calderon, and the ebullient Rupert Brooke, whose affection for Tahiti and its people was second only to his affection for England. Actually Loti spent but a few months at Tahiti, though to an artist a few months may become a lifetime. Rupert Brooke, who was there for three months in 1914, was completely enraptured by its exotic appeal. He described it as the most ideal place to live and work in, and revelled in the sight of the brown, lovely people with white flowers behind their ears, and the delightful bathing, with the fish swimming between his toes. He wrote, "Europe slides from me terrifyingly."

Pierre Loti said of it:

Go far from Papeete, where civilization has not penetrated, where native villages stand under the slender coconut-palms, houses thatched with pandanus-leaves, and on the rim of the coral reef and the immense and deserted ocean. Watch the quiet, dreaming hamlets, gatherings of natives reclining beneath the tall trees—silent and passive, feeding, as it seems, on the food of voiceless contemplation. Listen to the great calm of nature, the eternal and monotonous murmur of the breakers on the coral reef; look at the tremendous scenery, the cliffs of basalt, the dark verdure on the mountain-sides—and all lost in the midst of an immeasurable solitude—the Pacific.¹

And here are Lady Brassey's sensations on first sighting Tahiti from the deck of the *Sunbeam*. Her description is interesting as the expression of a more conventional but equally enchanted mind:

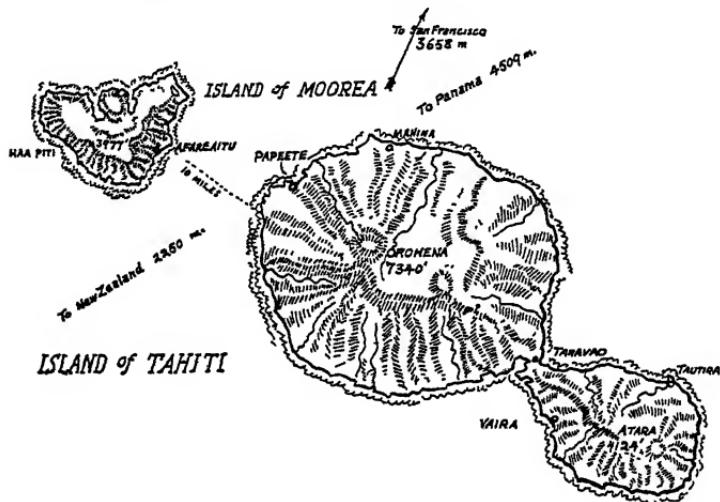
The sky above is of azure blue; a girdle of luxuriant and intensely green tropical vegetation, gorgeous with gaily coloured

¹ The quotations from Pierre Loti in this chapter are free translations of his original.

ENCHANTED ISLES

leaves and blossoms and golden-hued fruit, encompasses this delightful harbour; while corals, seaweeds, zoophytes, and fish of every possible tint and colour are seen, as in a wild garden, beneath the transparent waters on which we are floating.

But modern Tahiti, the Tahiti we know, is but a wraith of the Otaheiti of the eighteenth-century navigators Wallis, Cook and Bougainville, and Bligh. To them it was an un-

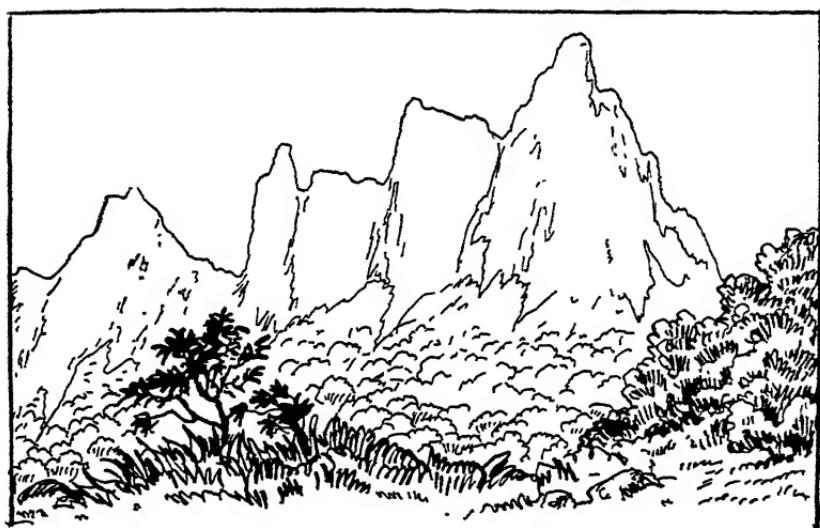


violated fairyland, the nearest thing to a garden of Eden on earth. Three things have brought about the decadence of the people: the sailors, with absence of morality, and the missionaries, with an excess of it, and, finally, the arrival of machines and machine-made merchandise. Only the hinterland, the jungle, remains the same—the beach is ringed with imported tin-roofed huts and bungalows.

Tahiti, the Otaheiti of Captain Cook and the *Bounty* mutineers, has progressed a long way since those unspoiled days. The Mother Hubbard dress for women and shirt and trousers for men have almost usurped the place of the *pareu* and *lava-lava*. The *lava-lava* is a short skirt or apron formerly made of native cloth (*tapa*), but latterly of gaudily printed cotton, and worn by men. The *pareu* is a similar

LOTI'S ISLE

garment but longer, reaching to the breasts, and worn by the women, who, by the way, are called all over Polynesia by the honourable name *vabine*. *Kanaka*, a common word in the Pacific and on the west coast of America, means 'Polynesian,' and refers to the male sex only. The word 'Tahiti' means, in Maori, 'transplanted from the East,' and



'Maori,' by which we designate the aborigines of New Zealand, is their own term for 'mankind.'

The island of Tahiti is a volcanic shell, rising to a height of 7340 feet above the sea in Mount Orohena. Tahiti disputes with Samoa and the Marquesas the honour of being the loveliest island in the world. But since there can be no such thing as superlative best while human tastes differ, the statement may be taken as you like it.

The isle is in area about the size of the English county of Middlesex, and is thirty-three miles across at its greatest length. It can be best visualized as a cluster of verdure-covered mountains rising abruptly out of the sea. The climate is as near perfect as no matter, with land breezes at night and sea breezes by day, with no winter to speak of.

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The deep, shaded valleys are irrigated by streams and cascades, and Nature is more than lavish with every kind of tropical fruit. The uplands are in the possession of goats, pigs, and wildfowl, the natives living almost entirely on the strip of shore by the sea, in which they are as much at home as on land. I once watched a Polynesian swimming under water, and he reminded me, more than anything else, of an otter, a simile which needs no further comment. Under the tall coconut-palms by the shore the Tahitian builds his wood-and-palmetto hut, and spends the days of his life in love and laughter, and swimming, with the minimum of work. Scarcely the ambition of the energetic Northerner, but until the coming of the white men it served him well enough. And, as the Tahitians asked, not without reason: Where did the white man's worry and strife get him? What did it lead to? Was he any better off after he was dead than they when they were dead?

Tahiti is almost too good to be true, for not only is the climate near perfect and the necessities of life free for the taking—a land where no one ever starves—but there are no venomous insects, no dangerous animals, no tropical fevers, while the water is pure and fruit everybody's property. If Bacon had visited Tahiti he might have found it necessary to readjust his views of Utopia, for here was a living Utopia, where the people were happy and good until the white sailors invaded their paradise. The white man brought in many marvels—machinery, telephones, bicycles, sewing-machines, corrugated iron, Christianity, crime, saxophones, firearms, mosquitoes, vermin, tuberculosis, venereal disease, and a vast code of false values.

Nevertheless, the island keeps most of its old enchantment. The half-bred people (there are few of pure blood left) still laugh, and play, and wear flowers over their ears.

How can we capture the Tahitian scene? Perhaps it is the almost sensual luxuriance of the vegetation that strikes one most, as though the udders of Mother Earth were full

LOTI'S ISLE

to bursting. The overgrown ferns, the enormous, spreading leaves, the thick green stalks of umbrageous plants, the soft-stemmed trees, more like plants than trees, have been nourished by H. G. Wells's Food of the Gods. And what a



HIBISCUS

spate of exotic flowers and fruit: frangipani (the plumeria blossom), bougainvillæas (named after the great French navigator), gardenias (*tiare Tahiti*, or 'flower of Tahiti'), hibiscus (pink, orange, and red), pandanus, mimosa—tropi-



OLEANDER

cal, prolific, almost indecent in their lush ripeness—pink convolvulus, yellow oleander, exaggerated in size, a vision of enormous white and yellow and crimson flowers, as though from some prehistoric swamp, the food of the brontosaurus. Flowers the size of dinner-plates, and having the unreality of a dream. Rotting fruits underfoot, filling the sweet, warm

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air with the odour of their decay, enormous, fat-paunched nuts, the weeping fronds of palms, gargantuan leaves on tremendous green stalks, plantains, breadfruit, coconuts, bananas, areca, oranges, guavas, date-palms, fan-palms, sycamore-, casuarina-, banyan-, and bamboo-trees.

Life there grows quickly and without coddling. There are no obstetricians with their Cæsarean surgery for Tahitian women, and no Luther Burbank to nurse the tangled vege-



BREADFRUIT

tation of the Tahitian jungle. No wonder the fruit-starved members of whalers' crews deserted ashore here whenever they got the chance. The unsophisticated natives made no distinction between an unlettered Nantucket whaleman and a man of finer fibre, and the lovely adolescent daughter of a chieftain might be theirs for the asking. Which raises the highly interesting question of native morality. Illegitimacy means nothing to them, for, in the words of the negro spiritual, they are "all God's chillun," and children are universally desired in Tahiti. To have a child by a white sailor was an honour, not a disgrace, and the mother was regarded enviously by her less fortunate sisters. Children were more a communal than a private matter in the old days, and with such a point of view immorality, as civilized people understand it, was simply not understood, and therefore could not be applied to the native. If the native thought at all about the white man's ethics he merely regarded him as a hypocrite. And immorality can't exist

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without hypocrisy. A Tahitian woman will say, "How shall I be able to tell whether I love him until I have slept with him?" The Polynesian accepted the trousers and skirt as an Ethiopian would accept a top-hat, not so much as a necessity for bodies that had gone unclothed since the beginning of man, but rather as an adornment, a jolly game. Which was a pity, for a Polynesian naked, or nearly so, looked every inch a thoroughbred, but in a pair of pants he looked ridiculous.

The conversation of a Tahitian company is in its way symbolic of the island's past felicity. Tahitian talk is never sad or unduly serious; indeed, it is regarded as bad manners to discuss tragic matters—a quaint and illuminating custom. The people are the true lotus-eaters. They are lazy, feckless, generous, unambitious—success has no attractions for them. They love one another, and loved the white man until they learned to distrust him. The essential feature of their character is cheerfulness, the smiling cheerfulness of young children. Physically they are of classic Greek proportions, and even to narrow Western standards a handsome race. There is nothing negroid in their blood, though not infrequently the Mongoloid strain is seen in oblique eyes and shape of the face. They are a courageous and chivalrous people, and put their women on a far higher plane than do most savage races. It is probable that the reason for the relatively high position of the women in Polynesian life is that the Polynesian male is a great lover. They love their women, childish, laughing, coquettish specimens of dusky femininity and frequently very beautiful. But the male is fickle in his loyalties, though no one is greatly perturbed by this, for it is an old Polynesian custom, and the maid is at liberty to find for herself another lover, a not very difficult matter in a community where even love seems to be a communal affair. The Tahitians live in clans, just as elsewhere, but in the clan all property is common property. It is only where individuals have no sense of personal possession that

ENCHANTED ISLES

communism becomes a workable thing. The complexities of a highly developed civilization are inimical to any programme that tends to absorb and wipe out the individual.

While in some ways the Tahitians had attained a development comparable to that of the Aztecs, and physically they were the superior race, they had no written language of their own, nor, until the coming of white men, had they ever seen metal. And, having no metal, their meats were perforce baked (since they had no receptacles in which to heat water), and their weapons were of stone or bone. Knives and cutting instruments were made from sharks' teeth, hard woods, or split bamboo; hatchets, of stone; spears, of wood or bone; drinking-vessels, of gourds, coconut-shells, or thin bark. Cloth (*tapa*) was made of a certain bark beaten until it formed a thin substance something like the felt of civilization.

When they attempted to imitate the Roman characters of the Western alphabet, when phonetically spelling words in their Maori language, the result was something like this:

UWAIAA · IWIAW · EAIAW

and carved in looking-glass style, from right to left. The absence of curved lines may be accounted for by the difficulties of cutting curves in wood, as this writing is usually incised in wood.

I have purposely avoided the bastard capital of Tahiti, Papeete, the only town on the island, and the meeting-place of every adventurer in the Pacific. Here the Tahitian can sample the American movies and get drunk like a white man. In the summer of 1891 an odd, eccentric figure stepped ashore at Papeete, a bizarre creature in yellow shoes, red cravat, and a green band round his straw hat—Paul Gauguin, the half-mad artist whom the *cognoscenti* have taken sides over ever since. As would be expected, he quickly 'went native,' as the saying is, and preferred the company of the

LOTI'S ISLE

Tahitians to that of the Papeete beachcombers. A choice easy to understand, though one wonders what the natives thought of the eccentric Frenchman. His strivings for honest pictorial expression of themselves and their lives resulted in some interesting experiments in paint, though scarcely flattering to 'the noble savage.' The low tone of his palette and the decorative quality of his designs are attractive, but his portraits are caricatures, with all the grotesquerie



of the school of rebels against the sticky sentiment of the Victorian manner. When a Society hostess says that she adores Gauguin you know that she is talking nonsense, for you can't adore such work unless you understand it, and it is not so easy to understand as all that. How sardonic would be the artist's smile if he could see the unseemly scramble for his work now! When he was alive his sketches could be bought for a flask of brandy; now they are priceless. But Gauguin needed very little money in Tahiti. So long as he could get paint and canvas and strong drink he was content —as content as his unbalanced ego would ever permit him to be. He stripped off the trappings of civilization along with most of his clothes, and lived with a fat and ugly old *vahine*, and in a *milieu* of domestic infelicity, painting the work that was to immortalize his name among the great painters of the earth. His odd behaviour and the squalor of his latter-day existence make, in comparison, Pierre Loti's amorous adventures in Tahiti almost primly respectable. But whatever holes we may pick in the fabric of Loti's

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immortal story it possesses a quality which defies criticism, and raises it among the few great love-stories of all time—great, not for its ideals, which were the trivialities of carnal love, but for its exquisite style and perfect cadence, and a pathos that haunts the heart of the reader long after the book is laid down.

When Pierre Loti began to write he was at the beginning of his career in the French Navy, and for that reason as much as any other he seems to have chosen the pseudonym inspired by the Indian flower the *loti*, a name bestowed on him by his fellow-officers.

The impressionable

young sailor instantly fell under the spell of Tahiti. Papeete, the mongrel port, had not then become the place that it is now. The island was waiting for such a champion, as a mistress awaits her lover. To his sister he wrote, "I have been almost all over the world and at last have found the island of my dreams." But some things he saw, such as the native becoming at times a little ridiculous by aping the white man's customs, hurt his sensitive soul, and his letters show it. But presently their tenor changed as Tahiti began to work its spell. And if he found it a New Cytherea, the Eden of the artist-voluptuary, it was no less enchanting for all that. If he found it a bower for the languors of love he did not, like the beachcomber, leave it without profit to himself or his fellow-men. The Tahitian interlude made a permanent impression on Loti's life and work, and throughout most of his subsequent novels one finds the same irresistible note of haunting sadness so marked in *Rarahu*, or



PIERRE LOTI, ABOUT 1870

LOTI'S ISLE

Le Mariage de Loti. *Le Mariage de Loti*, or, as it was first called, *Rarahu*, purported to be the love adventures of Harry Grant, a young English naval officer, who arrives at Tahiti in the man-of-war *Rendeer* (not *Reindeer*, as a pedantic critic once wrote from Costa Rica to tell me it should be spelled). It was odd that Loti should choose to make his hero, Harry Grant, an Englishman, since most of his life he held the English in contempt.

The sailor is describing Rarahu, the native girl whom he was shortly afterwards to fall in love with:

Rarahu was a little creature unlike other girls, but a lovely specimen of the Maori race which has peopled the Polynesian archipelagos, and which is one of the finest types of the human race. . . . Rarahu's eyes were tawny black, full of exotic languor and softness like the eyes of a kitten which is stroked; and her eyelashes so long and so black that you might have mistaken them for painted feathers. Her nose was short and delicate like the nose of a well-born Arab; her mouth, somewhat thick and too wide for a classical model, was prettily dimpled in its deep corners.

He speaks of her large, white teeth, her long, straight hair falling about her bare shoulders, her dusky brown skin, her small, beautifully formed body, her bosom polished and exquisitely formed, like her shapely arms. Her manners were those of a princess, and her movements were as graceful as those of a young fawn. She lived in a native thatched house with her aged foster-mother by the brook of Fataoua—a spot that has since become a place of pilgrimage for the more sentimental visitors to Tahiti. Her chief companion was Tiahoui, and the pair seemed to spend all their waking hours playing in the waters of Fataoua. But Tahitian maidens mature early, and, notwithstanding her wild-bird existence, Rarahu had somehow learned to read and write in Latin, and could write both in French and in a phonetic form of her own musical tongue.

Here Loti takes us aside to describe the sylvan paradise where, as Harry Grant, he first met Rarahu. In a dense

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thicket there was a natural bowl hollowed in the living rock by the silver cascade of Fataoua, which tumbled into the dark pool where Tahitian maidens sported like water-nymphs. Here, truth forces us to confess, came rough sailors, ashore for a few hours from whaling-ships, and here they were received by the naïve Polynesians, who felt honoured by the dangerous attentions of the white-skinned demigods from beyond the seas. And here in this Eden brown and white revelled in the pool and on its deep, turfed banks, and laid the foundations of sorrow for the unsophisticated, happy islanders.

There every day company was to be found: the loveliest girls of Papeete, lying on the grass, passing the tropical days, talking, singing, sleeping, or in swimming and diving in the pool, as much at home as the fish there.

Loti came upon this glade in the jungle, and saw the Tahitian maidens stretched out on the grass in the sunshine, some with their feet in the cool water. Enormous black velvet butterflies, with lavender markings like eyes, fluttered near, or rested on the watcher himself, as though their silky wings were too weighty to support them. The air was heavy with the unfamiliar scent of exotic flowers, and the young naval officer gave himself up to the enchantment of the scene. As he and his companion, an old woman named Tétouara, watched, the thick stems of mimosa- and guava-trees parted, and from the curtain of leaves two golden-brown girls, clad only in the short, gaudy cloth called a *pareu*, peered like two small, alert animals from their bower, and, seeming satisfied, danced out to lie under the cascade on the edge of the pool. The lovelier of these tawny dryads was Rarahu; the other was her female companion Tiahoui. Shortly after the two watchers were discovered, and the maidens, like frightened birds, and with a modesty which must have been most satisfying to Loti's Victorian readers, fled precipitately into the jungle.

The young naval officer followed up this informal meeting,

LOTI'S ISLE

and a month later the queen of the island—the famous Queen Pomare—is urging Loti to marry the maiden Rarahu. She argues that it would be a good thing for both of them. The Queen, however, was not suggesting a European marriage, a union for life, but a more transient thing, albeit quite in accord with the customs of the country. Loti promises to think it over. The maid is not consulted,



GARDENIA

though one may be sure that she will have no objection. But after some cogitation Loti hesitates. He is afraid of the disapproval of his superior officer, and to the imperious Queen pleads his own youth as an obstacle. Again, marriage costs money, even in Polynesia, and a young officer's means may not be adequate. Furthermore, the ship might sail at any time, and that would bring the marriage to an end almost before it had begun. In other words, Loti endows Harry Grant with more conscience than it was usual to meet with among the white visitors to those parts. But every one seems bent on the match, even Rarahu's foster-parents, urging that she is a big girl, no longer a child, and was not born to live alone, etc.

Meanwhile Loti is applying himself to the study of Tahitian, in order that he may the better converse with Rarahu, and has bought in Papeete a copy of the dictionary prepared phonetically by the brothers Picpus.

His ultimate decision is hastened by the fire and jealousy of the little Rarahu, who, true to type, is determined to have

ENCHANTED ISLES

her man. Her fate is sealed (for it is she who is to suffer most for loving) when one night she comes down from the hills and drags him off to her arboreal retreat. As Loti says, "Rarahu had made a mistake in dragging me away that evening." She had indeed.

But she is very much an untamed creature, and her wild ways give Loti much uneasiness, for he begins to see in her something more than a pretty savage, something which awakens finer emotions than he had suspected were possible. As for Rarahu, she becomes a changed creature, no longer running about like a feckless child, legs and breasts bare, a coquette, flashing her dark eyes at every man who passes. The lovers meet almost daily and spend languorous hours in the Tahitian forest by the pool of Fataoua, swimming, idling in the shade of the trees, picking the tropical fruits, talking and loving until sunset, when Rarahu returns to her forest home and Loti to his ship.

The atmosphere of the Tahitian scene is somewhat lost in my inadequate translation, and no excuse need be made for including this unspoiled passage:

Qui peut dire où réside le charme d'un pays? . . . Qui trouvera ce quelque chose d'intime et d'insaisissable que rien n'exprime dans les langues humaines? . . . Il y a dans le charme tahitien beaucoup de cette tristesse étrange qui pèse sur toutes ces îles d'Océanie,—l'isolement dans l'immensité du Pacifique,—le vent de la mer,—le bruit des brisants,—l'ombre épaisse,—la voix rauque et triste des Maoris qui circulent en chantant au milieu des tiges des cocotiers, étonnamment hautes, blanches et grêles. . . . On s'épuise à chercher, à saisir, à exprimer. . . . Effort inutile: ce quelque chose s'échappe, et reste incompris. . . .

J'ai écrit sur Tahiti de longues pages; il y a là-dedans des détails jusque sur l'aspect des moindres petites plantes, jusque sur la physionomie des mousses. . . .

Qu'on lise tout cela avec la meilleure volonté du monde, eh bien, après, a-t-on compris? . . . Non assurément. . . .

Après cela, a-t-on entendu, la nuit, sur ces plages de Polynésie toutes blanches de corail;—a-t-on entendu, la nuit, partir du fond

LOTI'S ISLE

des bois le son plaintif d'un *vivo*?¹ . . . ou le beuglement lointain des trompes en coquillage?

Loti and Rarahu had known each other something more than a month, and there still remained some months before the Englishman must depart with his ship. At the moment there was not a cloud in the sky of the lovers' Eden. Rarahu, like any Tahitian maiden with a sailor lover, did not expect the idyll to last indefinitely. It was part of the penalty of loving a *paoupa* (that is, a man who has come from distant lands beyond the sea), it was part of the penalty that one must lose him one day. But such knowledge did not make the breach hurt any less. The idyll was brought to an end when Loti departed in the ship for a month's cruise to Nukahiva and other islands. Rarahu saw him go, herself in tears. While he is absent she writes him her first letter, which Loti transcribes in Tahitian and French. It is in one long column and suggestive in its style of *vers libre*, and begins:

APIRÉ, le 10 mai 1872

O Loti, mon grand ami,
O mon petit époux chéri,
je te salue
par le vrai Dieu.
Mon cœur est très triste
de ce que tu es parti au loin,
de ce que je ne te vois plus.²

Hè returns to find that Rarahu's parents, Huamahine and Tahaapairu, have died during his absence, and that she is consequently alone and feeling her loss acutely. She asks Loti to stay with her:

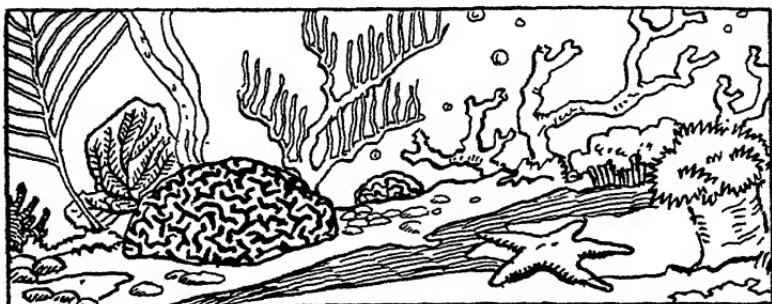
"Reste, O mon Loti," disait Rarahu. . . . "Si tu partais, demain je serais morte de frayeur. . . ."

Near the Queen's residence, just off a quiet avenue of palms, was a small bower at the foot of a clump of unusually tall coconut-palms. It had a veranda, overgrown with the

¹ Native flute. ² Rarahu could not speak French, though she could write it.

ENCHANTED ISLES

plant of the vanilla, and behind this secluded bower was a sort of garden enclosed by a dense growth of oleanders, acacias, hibiscus, and pink periwinkles (*pervenches roses*), the latter everywhere, even to trailing into the tiny house itself. And here, eight days after her adopted father's death, Rarahu and Loti came to live. Her dream was fulfilled. They gave a house-warming, inviting some of the nota-



bilities of the island besides their own particular friends. The supper Loti describes as "Sardanapalesque."

To a restless, active-minded person from beyond the tropics the drowsy, lotus-eating days that followed must in time grow irksome. Spending most of the day in hammocks, lying asleep or daydreaming, is not an occupation to suit an ambitious young naval officer, but the youthful wife asked for nothing better. There was no work to do, no beds to make, no sweeping, no cooking. Clothing was reduced to a minimum, and the morning toilet, a plunge into the Fataoua pool, was a pleasure rather than a duty. For food Rarahu was content with baked breadfruit, bananas, and coconuts, with perhaps a few sweet biscuits brought by Chinese pedlars from Papeete. Sometimes a friend would call in the afternoon to play cards—*écarté*, learned from the French, a game the natives had picked up quickly and grown immensely fond of. Or the young lovers would take a canoe and go out to the reef, where they would drop into the clear blue water and grope for shells and coral.

LOTI'S ISLE

Rarahu expressed her childlike happiness in singing, in strange, bird-like notes, sometimes shrill, sometimes as soft as a linnet's, a mixture of tunes she had learned in the mission and those of her own improvising. In the evening she would weave chaplets of flowers, usually the strong-smelling white gardenia, and the couple would walk through the cool forests or by the seashore. They would return early to their Eden, and spend an hour or so of quiet happiness before retiring, but, as Loti wrote,

it was not quite the same as those days of profound peace or insouciant fun in the wood of Fataoua. There was already something sad and anxious—I loved her more than before, because she was alone in the world and because to the people of Papeete she was my wife. The sweet habits of this life of ours united us more closely as the days passed, but this life which so enchanted us could not endure; it must end in separation. The terrible separation which would divide us with oceans and continents—the overwhelming diameter of the entire earth.

Each day Rarahu seemed to develop more into a woman, her figure becoming rounder, fuller, but a close observer might have noticed a thin blue cloud over her eyes, and a little dry cough would shake her frame from time to time. Her mind as well as her body was quickly developing, and Loti professes to find it hard to keep pace with the development of her intelligence. Besides her own native wit she was rapidly assuming many of the ideas of the white race. She read her Bible frequently, and found an almost ecstatic pleasure in doing so, but her inner nature, with its barbaric contradictions and inconsistencies, remained unchanged. She was never two hours the same.

One day there is great feasting on the neighbouring isle of Moorea, and the frigate *Rendeer* has carried Queen Pomare, her court, and many score maidens across the intervening water. Rarahu is among the merry-making crowd, and that night, pacing the deck during his watch, Loti ponders upon his *inamorata* and their ill-advised *liaison*. He

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hears the strains of wild music ashore, and is unhappy that the innocent, unprotected girl is loose in that saturnalia. He is filled with remorse at leaving her ashore to such barbaric orgies. He loves her with genuine devotion—and yet he realizes that there is a great void between them which can never be spanned. She is at heart a savage; there are the vast racial differences and entire disharmony of viewpoint over the elemental things. Neither understands the depths of the other. It is only the shallows that they know, and Rarahu, once in bewilderment, showed her knowledge of this disparity when she said, “*J'ai peur que ce ne soit pas le même Dieu qui nous ait créées.*” And Loti felt, with a pang, that the union of their souls could only be transitory, incomplete, and tormented. With Latin fatalism he admits what must be must be:

Poor little Rarahu, very soon, when we are far apart, you will revert to the little Maori girl again, ignorant and savage, and will die in your distant island, alone and forgotten—and Loti, perhaps, may not even hear of it.

What an unhappy picture, but how ironically Gallic!

However, we must hurry to the tale's tragic conclusion. Rarahu has flirted among the men during the celebrations at Moorea, and Loti upbraids her. There are quarrels, recriminations, tears, and making up. She is irresistible. The corruption of the semi-civilized port of Papeete is a danger spot to Tahitian women, and Rarahu is afraid that its lure will be too great for her resistance when Loti is gone. The whole romance is, indeed, a profound study of a nature that, paradoxically, can love deeply while yet being physically disloyal. Rarahu has been several times to Papeete, where she is spoiled by the visiting sailors. Loti knows it, and even confesses that “she was ruined,” but declares his inability to do anything permanent for her. Their natures were so opposed, and he could but imperfectly understand her inconsistencies and contradictions. Her very ruin, body and soul, lent her charm, the charm of one who is going to die.

LOTI'S ISLE

He believed that he loved her more than ever. As for the object of his inquietude, she was never sweeter, more docile than now. It was as though she had a premonition of the future. She would cling to her lover, as though to prevent him ever leaving her. Henceforth the romance is charged with an undercurrent of tragedy, so poignantly written that one may scarcely read it without tears. Rarahu is to all intents a woman, her body and her mind prematurely developed, and her beauty a thing to marvel at, but it is the fevered beauty of a tubercular subject, and the short, hard cough is becoming more frequent.

The frigate is ordered to sail for California, and we will spare ourselves the heartrending scene between Loti and Rarahu. It is not the last time that he will see her. At San Francisco some months later a letter arrives from Rarahu addressed, "To Loti, the man wearing epaulets with the English admiral on board the steam frigate *Rendeer*."

Loti replies with a long letter, which is carried to Tahiti in a whaler. He assures Rarahu that he will be returning to Papeete before the year is out. At the end of November the *Rendeer* is once more anchored in the small roadstead. Rarahu is noticeably thinner, and her cough is more persistent. She is now sixteen, but appears much older. "Il semblait que son visage eût pris ce charme ultra-terrestre de ceux qui vont mourir. . . ."

For a few short days they return to live in the bower where they had spent the first weeks of their passionate companionship. There are diversions, swimming, exploring the forest, and an excursion by canoe to the island of Moorea, which brings us to the moment of the second tragic parting. Loti, before parting, begs the old Queen to take care of Rarahu.

"And what afterwards? What could you do for her?" the old lady inquires bluntly.

"I will return," Loti replied, hesitating.

But the Queen laconically reminds him that his own

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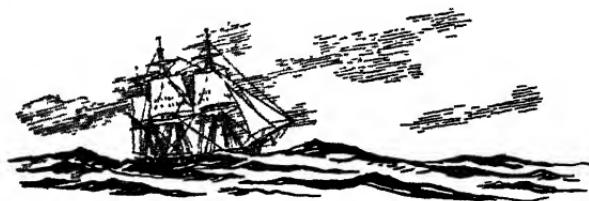
brother, who had also a sweetheart once in Tahiti, had failed to keep his promise to return. Rarahu's heart is breaking, but she busies herself with trifles to hide grief. The last day they spend together she turns to her lover.

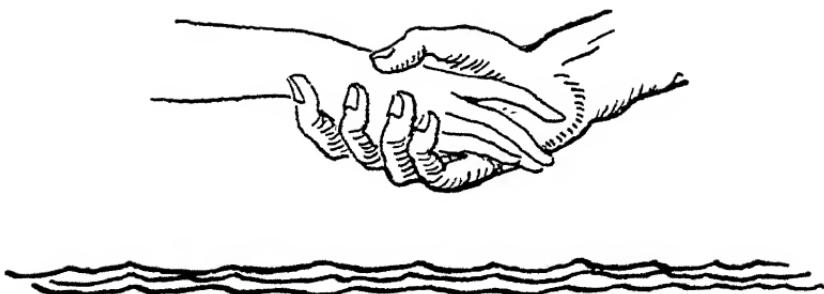
"Loti," she said, "I belong to you—I am your little wife, am I not? . . . Do not fear for me: I believe in God; I do pray . . . I will pray. All that you ask of me I will do. To-morrow when you go I will leave the town for ever, never to be seen there again. I will live with Tiahouï; I will have no husband but you."

"Just before dawn I kissed my little sweetheart for the last time," wrote Loti.

He never saw her again. After reaching his ancestral home in England he received a letter from Rarahu, a distressing thing I will not quote. One year later a second letter, dated Papeete, December 3, came from her. She has not heard from Loti (though he has written once), and her letter is less courageous but no less tender than the former one. She tells him that she is mortally ill and, like the arum flower that is faded, is no longer pretty.

Two months later Loti meets in London a friend recently returned from Tahiti. He learns that Rarahu went to live with a young French officer, but left him after three months. After that she remained in Papeete and took to a dissolute life. Over a year later while on station at Malta he hears that Rarahu has left Tahiti with her sole companion, a pet cat. She had set out for the island of Borabora, where she had gone to die. A few days later she died, at the age of eighteen.





CHAPTER V

Isle of France

IN the Southern Indian Ocean, 2300 miles from the Cape of Good Hope, 9500 miles from England, and 550 miles east of Madagascar, lies the sub-tropical island of Mauritius, also called the Isle of France. To philatelists it is best known as the birthplace of the rarest postage-stamps in the world—stamps which have been bought by collectors for fantastic sums. To ornithologists it is familiar as the home of that absurd extinct bird the dodo, to meteorologists as within the area of those revolving storms known as cyclones, and to romanticists as the background to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's classic love tragedy *Paul et Virginie*.

It is, indeed, this curious old-world romance that is responsible for the inclusion of the Isle of France among this oddly assorted collection, for I cannot speak from personal knowledge of the country.

However, for the better visualization of the Mauritian scene here are a few guide-book facts. Thus: Mauritius is elliptical in shape and measures thirty-six miles by its longer axis and twenty-two miles by its shorter one. When it was discovered by the Portuguese navigator Mascarenhas in 1505 it was uninhabited. As the first discoverers had their eyes set on the richer jewel India, and made no efforts to colonize the island, it was left to the Dutch to come along and take

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possession in 1598, nearly a century later. They were responsible for the name Mauritius, after a noted stadholder of the period.¹ The Portuguese had named it Ilha do Cerné, believing it to be the island referred to by Pliny the

historian. But Dutch interest in the country appeared to be half-hearted, for after building a fort and introducing a few slaves and convicts they abandoned it in 1710. Five years later the French landed on its shores and took possession in the name of the French East India Company, who called it the Isle of France. One of its governors was the famous old sea-dog Admiral Mahé de la Bourdonnais, who

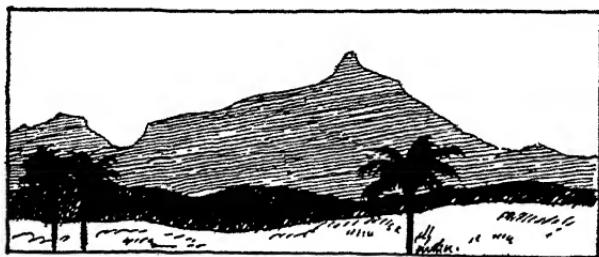


founded the present capital, Port Louis. During the long wars between England and France at the beginning of the nineteenth century the island was a station for French frigates, which sallied out to harry British shipping on the India trade-routes. The menace became so serious to British interests that the Government decided to attempt its capture, a plan that was successfully accomplished in 1810. In 1814 Britain's possession was confirmed by the Treaty of Paris, the victors agreeing to the inhabitants' retaining their own religion, customs, and laws. With the result that though the island—its name again restored to Mauritius—has been in the possession of the British for over

¹ Count Maurice of Nassau.

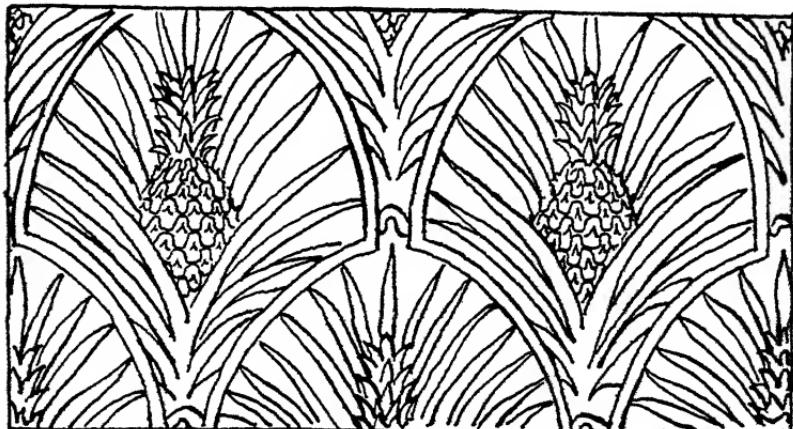
ISLE OF FRANCE

a century, it still remains in language, customs, and predilections largely French. That the British are good colonizers is well known, and it is not surprising to hear that victor and vanquished live together in complete harmony.



LE POUCE

A glance at the map will give an instant impression of its physical character. Its verdure-covered, volcanic scenery has been frequently praised for its loveliness. Its fruits are,



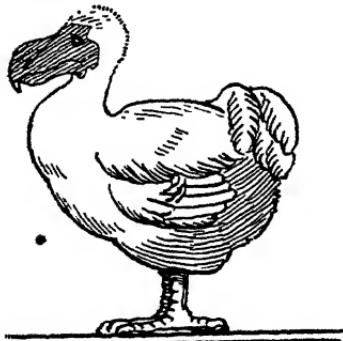
PINEAPPLE

of course, tropical—banana, fig, guava, pineapple, avocado, custard-apple, mango, tamarind, etc. Its most conspicuous height is Le Pouce ('the thumb'), a volcanic finger pointing into the sky, 2600 feet above the sea, and from the summit of which the entire island may be seen. There is a central plateau of lava about thirteen miles across, and skirted by

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ragged, black mountains descending to the sea. So much for sizes and measurements.

Sir Herbert Thomas, travelling in those parts as early as 1677, sent his daughter in England a dodo, then a living bird, but unknown outside Mauritius. It could not fly, and vied in grotesqueness with the rhinoceros hornbill. Bald, ugly, clumsy, with thick, ungainly legs and a bulbous beak, it has, inspite of these handicaps, become the most famous and intriguing bird in the world. It started to die out with the advent of the human invaders to its isle, and by about



the year 1700 it had disappeared altogether. Not the least curious thing about this undoubtedly curious fowl was the fact of its being peculiar to Mauritius. Its name came from the Portuguese word *doudo*, a simpleton. Living specimens were brought to Europe, and some were stuffed and mounted after death, but, like the species, they seem to have become extinct, for, so far as is known, no stuffed examples of dodo exist now. Present-day knowledge of them is got from early drawings, written descriptions, and the existence in certain museums of such imperishable parts as the bones, the beak, and the feet.

Certain famous travellers have left behind them their impressions of Mauritius, among whom is Captain Joshua Slocum, whose voyage alone round the world in his yawl-rigged 9-tonner *Spray* set the fashion in lone blue-water voyages. He spent forty days on the island. There were also those two totally different characters Charles Darwin and Mark Twain, whose descriptions of the island are not so dissimilar as one might have expected. It is as if these tropical isles had the power of reducing to a common level

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the emotional reactions of two such dissimilar minds as those of Darwin and Clemens. The man of science, to whom sentiment is a drug to the intellect, and the professional humorist, to whom sentiment is equally inimical to clear thinking, both lapse a trifle when they sight Mauritius. Thus



GUAVA (*PSIDIUM*)

for a brief passage their writings, normally so utterly opposed, find a common denominator in a subject that brings forth their unguarded expressions of pleasure.

Thus Darwin:

In the morning we passed round the northern end of Mauritius, or the Isle of France. From this point of view the aspect of the island equalled the expectations raised by the many well-known descriptions of the beautiful scenery. The sloping plain of the Pamplemousses, interspersed with houses, and coloured by the large fields of sugar-cane of a bright green, composed the foreground. The brilliancy of the green was the more remarkable because it is a colour which generally is conspicuous only from a short distance. Towards the centre of the island groups of wooded mountains rose out of this highly cultivated plain; their summits, as so commonly happens with ancient volcanic rocks, being jagged into the sharpest points. Masses of white clouds were collected around these pinnacles, as if for the sake of pleasing the stranger's eye. The whole island, with its sloping border and central mountains, was adorned with an air of perfect elegance: the scenery, if I may use such an expression, appeared to the sight harmonious.¹

¹ *Voyage of the "Beagle."*

ENCHANTED ISLES

And now Mark Twain:

What there is of Mauritius is beautiful. You have undulating wide expanses of sugar-cane, a fine fresh green and very pleasant to the eye; and everywhere else you have a ragged luxuriance of tropic vegetation of vivid greens of varying shades, a wild tangle of under-brush, with graceful tall palms lifting their crippled plumes high above it; and you have stretches of shady dense forest, with limpid streams frolicking through them, continually glimpsed and lost and glimpsed again in the pleasantest hide-and-seek fashion; and you have some tiny mountains, some quaint and picturesque groups of toy peaks, and a dainty little vest-pocket Matterhorn;¹ and here and there and now and then a strip of sea with a white ruffle of surf breaks into the view.²

Considering the normal writings of these two men, writings the very antithesis of each other, the two descriptions quoted are very similar in essentials, except that the latter is the better of the two. One touch of nature has brought the humorist and the scientist together. Others of the writing fraternity have found inspiration in Mauritius, of whom the morbid Baudelaire was perhaps the greatest. He lived there for a time in 1841, and left an unforgettable picture of the land in his sonnet *The Creole Lady*. Alexandre Dumas chose Mauritius as the scene for his novel *Princesse Georges*, the action taking place in 1810.

But it is to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre that Mauritius owes its greatest, and widest-known, romance. And though it has never been claimed to be other than fiction, the common grave of the lovers is shown to visitors in the botanical gardens at Pamplemousses. The author of *Paul et Virginie* was born at Le Havre in 1737, and went in 1768 to live for three years on the Isle of France, an experience fully described in his *Voyage à l'Île de France* (1773). His masterpiece was published in 1788, and reflects the artificial spirit of the pre-Revolutionary age. Although the story is mannered and unreal, it was a definite advance on the purely

¹ This doubtless refers to Le Pouce.

² *A Tramp Abroad*.

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artificial life as portrayed by Watteau and Boucher in the realm of painting. Whatever faults of excessive and pious sentiment the romance was marred by, it was a real breaking away from the lifeless wordiness of contemporary writers, and the first successful effort to capture the aura of natural backgrounds—a change from the painted back-drops of the love-bowers of Versailles and Fontainebleau. Rousseau was the first of the new school; then came Saint-Pierre, closely followed by Chateaubriand, whose *Atala* is, to my thinking, a greater tale. But how far these pioneers in saner



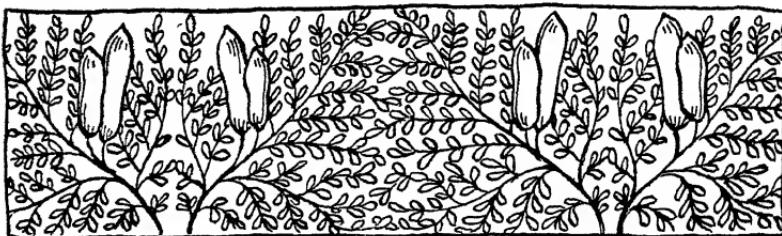
BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE

literature had to go will be seen in a perusal of *Paul et Virginie*. Its style is theatrical and morbid, the sentiment being at times excessive to nauseaation. Yet the romance continues to hold its place in literature, and rightly so, if only for the convincing picture it gives us of the age in which the scene is laid, and particularly nature life on the island of Mauritius over a century ago. Approached in this frame of mind, and not a captious one, the story carries the reader magically to the leisurely days of oak and hemp, of spinets and dimity, of Daphnis and Chloe in coloured wood-cuts, of broadsides and ballad-sheets, of muffin-boys and beadles, of silhouette portraits and miniatures of ladies in fichus and powdered hair, of colonial emigrants, of convict ships, Georgian houses, of Henry Fielding, Aphra Behn, and *Oroonoko*, of Wapping Stairs and the East Indiamen, of locked tea-caddies and steel engravings of naval actions. The period of the classic revival, when the women of the *monde chic* damped their seductive dresses to make them cling the more alluringly to their lovely limbs and bodies; when artists made people skip or prance rather than walk,

ENCHANTED ISLES

and float rather than stand; when all women had big, soulful eyes and baby mouths; when fountains were fashioned in the likeness of cupids and nymphs; when wind-swept hair and Byron curls and small feet were the masculine ideal; when common nouns began with capitals, and u was v, and s was f, and book titles were a page long, and waves were ‘billows,’ and the sea was the ‘bounding main.’

Paul et Virginie is said to have brought all the ladies of



TAMARIND

France to tears. Such lachrymose raptures were only possible in an age when excessive sentimentality was accepted as the natural thing. And of this tale it can fairly be said that it is probably the most sentimental book in the whole of European literature.

The tale is related to the author by an old man who knew the protagonists well.

On the eastern slope of the mountain rising behind Port Louis are the ruins of two diminutive cottages, situated in a tiny amphitheatre, or basin, in the rock of the mountain-side, and approached by a narrow opening facing north. Before the entrance, at the foot of the mountain, the sea breaks on the rocky coast with a thunder that may be heard from a great distance. Almost directly below lies the port, and to the right the promontory so grimly named Cape Misfortune. Into the hollow where the ruins stand the sun’s rays enter only at noon, but throughout the day they catch the rim “in a noose of light.” The old man tells how the cottages had been inhabited twenty years before, and the substance

ISLE OF FRANCE

of his story is the telling of how they came to be abandoned and to fall into ruin.

In the year 1726 an adventurous young Norman called de la Tour sailed with his young wife to the distant Isle of France, to make, as he hoped, his fortune. The marriage had been made in haste, against the wishes of the bride's parents, who were of an ancient and noble family, and who objected to the union on the grounds that the young man was of obscure birth and without money. But feeling love stronger than filial duty, the girl married, dowerless, and bravely faced the consequences. In due time the young couple reached Port Louis, and after seeing his bride established on a little homestead the husband set off for the island of Madagascar to buy slaves, a necessary adjunct to any colonial household two centuries ago. While in Madagascar de la Tour contracted some sort of fever and died, leaving the young, and already pregnant, wife destitute, save for a loyal negress slave named Mary. Mme de la Tour, for the sake of the young life within her, resolved to face her difficulties, and with the slave's help began a search for a suitable piece of ground in the mountains where they would be free from urban interference and false friends. Searching, they came upon the basin in the rocks, which appeared ideally suited to their purpose, provided that a white woman they found living there was agreeable to the arrangement. This woman was a Breton peasant known as Margaret, and who also possessed a slave, an old negro named Domingo. Margaret's history was an even more melancholy one than Mme de la Tour's. She had been betrayed and abandoned, and when her child came had decided to start life anew in the colonies, taking her babe with her. When Mme de la Tour found Margaret suckling her child, a boy she had named Paul, all thoughts of rank and social differences were swept away in the flood of mutual sympathy. After the two women had heard the tale of each other's misfortunes Margaret pressed Mme de la Tour to share her tiny

ENCHANTED ISLES

cottage until such time as she would have a cottage of her own.

The old man relating the tale tells how he found Madame “a very interesting figure, majestic and melancholy.” How these eighteenth-century writers loved the wan gesture, the tearful farewell! She, Madame, was now nearing her time of delivery, and the honest Margaret helped her prepare for the event. The rock basin, an area of about twenty acres, was divided equally, and, with the assistance of Margaret’s slave, the teller of the story builds a cottage for Madame—a structure of saplings roofed with huge leaves. Scarcely was the second cottage ready when Mme de la Tour was delivered of a daughter. The infant was christened Virginie, or (in English) Virginia. Mary and Domingo, the two slaves, looked after the household and garden work, while the two mothers spent most of their time spinning cotton for a livelihood. When Virginia was born the two slaves had married, an arrangement that in no way disturbed the domestic affairs of the little community. Mary did all the cooking and made journeys to Port Louis to sell their surplus vegetables and bring back needed merchandise. The two white women seldom visited the port for fear of being ostracized on account, as they said, of the crudity of their dress. Life had resolved itself into an uneventful routine. They possessed two goats and a watch-dog, two faithful slaves, a cottage each, a garden, and their adored children. Mme de la Tour and Margaret would sit side by side all day spinning—an intolerable existence it would seem to most people. All the week they lived thus, in the mountains. Sundays, for a change and spiritual absolution, they would put on their shoes and climb down to the small Catholic church in the valley.

The friendship of the women was intensified through their children. The babes bathed together, slept in the same cradle, and even exchanged their mother’s milk. The mothers had already begun to discuss, while they were yet

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in their cradles, their future marriage. When they learned to speak their first lisping words were 'brother' and 'sister.' They grew up to be inseparable, their mothers practising ideals that are comparable to the latest modern theories of child-culture. There was no using the Deity as a threat, and no corporal punishment as a corrective. As they grew older the children became ideal helpmates in this improbable paradise. Virginia would go to the well for water, and Paul



AVOCADO

would carry out those heavier duties befitting a man. All four would eat their meals in pleasant weather out of doors under a banana-tree. But although the children were taught the ethics of virtuous conduct, and the practical accomplishments of cooking, sewing, spinning, fishing, and hunting, their scholastic education was perforce neglected, and neither could read or write.

At the age of twelve Virginia may be visualized as flaxen-haired with blue eyes and coral-rose lips, her young body already forming into a woman's. Their lack of a sophisticated upbringing had its virtues, so long as they could remain thus isolated from the false standards of civilization. They knew nothing of prudery.

*Jamais les sciences inutiles n'avaient fait couler leurs larmes;
jamais les leçons d'une triste morale ne les avaient remplis d'ennui.
Ils ne savaient pas qu'il ne faut pas dérober, tout chez eux étant
en commun; ni être intempérant, ayant à discréption de mets
simples; ni menteur, n'ayant aucune vérité à dissimuler.*

As for Paul, he was already showing the character of the man he would be. Physically the opposite to Virginia, he

ENCHANTED ISLES

was tall, his complexion dark, his eyes black, his nose aquiline. They are described as being so beautiful a pair that when they sat together they resembled an antique group in marble. But now that Virginia was growing up Mme de la Tour began to think of her future and desire for her the education she had so far missed, and a dower for her inevitable marriage. At the time of Virginia's birth she had written to a rich aunt in France to enlist her interest in the babe. And now, after an interval of eleven years, an answer came, but one full of criticism and hostility. The aunt reminded her that, having married an adventurer, she deserved whatever ill-fortune had come to her, and that the early death of her husband was a sign of God's displeasure, and, further, that she had done well not to dishonour her family by returning to France. With the ship that brings the letter is a M. de la Bourdonaye, sent by the harsh old woman to investigate the condition and character of the young Virginia and report to her on his return to France.

Mme de la Tour, in tears, reads the letter to the family. Margaret embraces her tenderly; Paul (manfully) stamps with just rage; Virginia tearfully kisses her hands; and the slaves, hearing the sounds of rage and grief, run in to console her. Such proofs of love and devotion dissipate the unhappy woman's grief, and she looks at those around her.

"Ah, my children! Misfortune can only attack me from afar; but happiness is always around me."

One Sunday while Madame is at church in Pamplemousses there arrives a thin, exhausted negress, a runaway slave, who shows Virginia whip welts on her back, and craves protection. Paul and Virginia here provide a little interlude which is of no moment to the main thread of the romance. They decide on their own youthful responsibility to return with the slave to her master to implore pardon. There follows an adventure that is little better than a schoolboy story for the sheer *naïveté* of its telling—an adventure in the jungle. There is an interview with the white master (who, like

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Simon Legree, is a sombre villain), and his agreeing to free the slave, not for the love of God, but (having taken in Virginia's beauty) for the love of her. But they distrust the white man and fly from him, and get lost in the tropical jungle till nightfall, and are found by the faithful Domingo and the dog Fidèle, who leads them back by tortuous trails to their homes, where they arrive after midnight.



There are many descriptions of tropical life and scenery, for the author was above all an observer. It is this 'atmosphere' which gives the story life in spite of its artificial, cloying sentiment. He describes the expeditions which the pair make together to the shore at the foot of the mountain, where they would fish for polyps, lobsters, crabs, roaches, sea-urchins, shrimps, oysters and other molluscs, but never forgetting that Virginia is a lady, lovely and fragile and of the weaker sex.

Paul, who, besides his other qualities, could swim like a fish, now and then advanced upon the shallows to meet the surge, then, as it approached, fled towards the shore, pursued by its vast, foaming, and raging swell, a considerable way up the strand. But Virginia, as often as she saw this, screamed aloud, and declared that such amusement terrified her greatly.¹

¹ The extracts from *Paul et Virginie* are rendered freely from the original.

ENCHANTED ISLES

And again:

Virginia chanted the felicity of a rural life, and the wretchedness of seafaring men, whom avarice prompts to encounter a furious element, rather than to cultivate the earth, which confers so many benefits in peace and tranquillity.

The author sustains to the end the curious, exotic unreality and sentimental idealism he sets out to portray. He never lets us down by coming to earth, as it were. Paul and Virginia grow up in their eighteenth-century picture-book paradise, in purity and contentment. The torments of envy and ambition are unknown to them, for their solitude has removed them from all that is sordid and vile. They regard with rapture the power of the Providence which, aided by their efforts, has diffused amid these barren rocks beauty, abundance, and simple pleasures. They are not disturbed by clocks or almanacs or books on useless sciences, for their days are regulated naturally by the needs of nature. The hours are known by the shadows of the trees, the seasons by the bearing of fruit and flowers, and the passing years by the number of harvests.

When asked their ages Virginia would reply:

Paul, my brother, is the same age with the great coconut-tree by the fountain, and mine is that of the smaller one. The mango-trees have given their fruit twelve times, and the orange-trees have opened their flowers twenty-four times, since I came into this world.

Like fauns and dryads, their lives seem to be connected with those of the trees. Virginia, gentle, modest, and confident, like Eve; Paul, like Adam, with the stature of a man and all the simplicity of a child. He would say, speaking to Virginia:

When I am weary the sight of thee revives me; when from the mountain's height I descry thee at the bottom of this valley, when thou walkest toward the dwelling of our mothers, the partridge

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which trips along to its young ones has a breast less beautiful and a step less light than thou hast.

But the inevitable processes of nature were working to disturb the innocent tranquillity of their days. Virginia began to feel herself tormented by a strange disquiet. Serenity no longer sat upon her white brow, nor did smiles come so readily to her lips. Before Paul she became capricious and uncertain and no longer spoke freely about love, for it had suddenly taken a new and terrible meaning. She began to wander much alone, seemed languorous and disinclined to talk, her old gaiety gone. She withdrew herself from the society of her family and games with Paul. Sometimes she would approach him with the old care-free manner, playfully, then unaccountably hesitate, her cheeks flushed, her eyes unable to meet his. Paul, with the divine obtuseness of the male, was puzzled and unhappy at the unaccountable change in Virginia, and now fished and hunted alone, his own bewilderment scarcely made better by the changes that were also taking place, unconsciously, within him.

In the meantime Margaret had said to Mme de la Tour, "Why should we not marry our children? Their passion is mutual, though my son is not sensible of it."

But Virginia's mother felt that they were both too young and too poor, and that first Paul should grow stronger and older, and be sent to India, where in commerce he could earn enough to buy slaves, and so become a man of property. On his return he would be in a position to marry Virginia, and all would be well. But they reckoned without Paul, who was vehement against going to India. Why, he wants to know, can he not succeed equally well on the island? And what if anything should befall his family, especially Virginia, who even then appeared to be in some anguish. While the subject was still unsettled a letter arrived from Madame's formidable aunt, who had not long before recovered from a serious illness, and whose obdurate nature, it seemed, had been softened by the nearness of death. The letter, couched

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in conciliatory terms, requested her niece to send her daughter to France to receive the education of a gentlewoman, a place at Court, and the inheritance of the aunt's fortune, the last favour resting on Virginia's compliance with the writer's request that she set out for France. This letter filled the little circle with dismay. The proposal was unthinkable. How could dear Virginia be spared? A negative answer was unanimous, for Virginia herself, ever unselfish, would willingly sacrifice the golden offer for the love of her family.

But the next morning there arrived a visitor on horseback, no less a person than the governor himself, whose visit was to persuade Virginia to accept the offer. Taking her mother aside, he informed Madame that a ship was in the port ready to sail for France, and that a lady, one of his own kinswomen, was returning in her, and would look after the young girl during the voyage. He then set down on the table a heavy bag, which, he said, contained money sent by the aunt to purchase for Virginia whatever would be necessary for the passage to France. And bowing to the little company, he departed, confident that he had won Mme de la Tour to his side. And it was so, for Madame urged upon them the benefits that would accrue to Virginia, pointing out the selfishness of keeping her on the island in the face of such an opportunity for her own betterment. She urged that it need only be for a short time, and then she could return to Paul. That evening her father-confessor climbed up to the cottage, sent by the governor to add his persuasion to his own. Virginia, being naturally of a religious nature, listened to the priest telling her that it was her duty to go, as by the wealth she inherited she could minister to the unfortunate, and ended his appeal by urging her in the name of God to make the sacrifice. At the word 'sacrifice' the pious girl burst into tears, and announced her submission to what she believed to be the will of God.

But Paul felt no such spirit of sacrifice, and used all the

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rhetoric at his command to induce his beloved Virginia to alter her decision. Bitterly he spoke of the attractions of wealth and his own inability to compete with the aunt's money. Awakened passions roused him to upbraid her cruelly, and in despair he gives voice to the immemorial plaint of the unhappy lover:

"Cruel woman! What is to happen to me? Since a new destiny attracts you and since you seek wealth and fortune in a far land, permit me at least to accompany you. Permit me to follow you as your slave?"

At the end of this abasing appeal he burst into sobbing, and Virginia, herself tormented with indescribable anguish of heart, cries, "I go for your sake. You have slaved to keep us; now by my wealth I will repay you. . . . O Paul, you are far dearer to me than a brother."

And he replies in a terrible voice, clasping his arms round her, "I shall accompany her. Nothing can shake my resolution."

Now Mme de la Tour appeals to his manhood: "What will become of us if you abandon us? We need you more than ever now." He turns, glaring almost savagely, like a cornered wild beast: "Do you act the part of a mother, you who would separate brother and sister? Heartless woman! May the ocean never give her back to your arms!"

This terrible outburst leaves him exhausted, perspiration streaming down his countenance. Virginia, torn between her desire and her almost fanatical sense of duty, endeavours to console him. She avows her readiness to do whatever the others decide for her, and swears that if it is ordained that she goes she will remain true to Paul, living for the day that they will meet again. His head droops; a torrent of tears gushes from his eyes.

But Madame's counsels triumph in the end, and preparations are begun for Virginia's departure. Reports that the women in the cottages have inherited a great fortune spread among the people along the coast, and the little basin in the

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mountain is soon besieged by itinerant merchants and pedlars eager to sell their wares. Paul is overwhelmed with sorrow while he watches the preparations for Virginia's departure.

She wore a white muslin frock, lined with rose-coloured taffeta: her stays displaying her elegant shape to great advantage; her wonderful flaxen hair, in long doubled tresses, adorned her virgin head. Her deep blue eyes had taken on an expression of melancholy, and the agitation which her heart endured, struggling with long-repressed passion, gave to her complexion a rosy tint and tones of deep emotion to her voice. The very contrast with such an elegant dress, which she appeared to wear, as it were, against her will, made her languor the more affecting. It was impossible to see her without being oneself affected.

Paul, terribly unhappy, is now further depressed by his mother's choosing this time to break to him the news of his illegitimacy. In his hyper-morbid condition of mind he sees in this intelligence the reason for Mme de la Tour's sending Virginia away. That evening he sits alone with his beloved underneath the trees.

It was one of those wonderful nights so common in the tropics, nights whose beauty cannot be conveyed in words. The moon appeared in the centre of the dark vault of the sky enveloped by a filmy curtain which was slowly dissipated by her rays. Her light insensibly diffused itself over the mountains of the island, and over their peaks, which glittered with sparkling silvery verdure. Not a breath of wind stirred.

But in the woods in the valley, and on the heights, could be heard the soft warblings and murmurings of birds, which were caressing each other, as though happy with the beauty of the night and the tranquillity of the air. Even the very insects hummed in the grass, and the stars twinkling in the sky reflected their trembling images on the surface of the ocean.

The old teller of the tale appears to Paul and asks him to spend the night at his home to calm himself, and he accompanies the older man in silence. He passes a restless, distraught night, and returns early to the cottage. But

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Virginia has departed. The ship had sailed at daybreak, taking her with it. He rushes to the port, but the ship is nowhere to be seen. Ascending the highest peak, he scans the sea, dumb with grief. He continues to watch long after the ship has gone, and here the old man finds him in the evening, his head against the rock, his eyes staring at the ground. For many days he remains inconsolable, and bitterly reproaches Mme de la Tour for deceiving him, but she explains that a fair wind sprang up during the night, and that the governor himself came and hurried Virginia on board.

The human heart can take a surprising amount of punishment and survive. Paul slowly recovers from the extremity of grief, and resumes the routine of his pastoral existence, but the birds, and goats, and the dog Fidèle all serve to keep the memory of his grief alive. Articles belonging to Virginia, even the dead nosegay she once wore, he treasures. He labours on the plantation as of yore, but now all his spare time is spent in study. The old man has begun to teach him reading and writing in order that he may be able to correspond with Virginia. An apt scholar, he quickly learns to read, and shows a marked inclination for the Greek classics —Telemachus being his favourite.

Two years pass before a letter arrives from Virginia. She had written several times previously, but each letter had been stolen by orders of the aunt, who, while she treated her niece with kindness, would tolerate no communication with her island people. The young girl was put into a convent school near Paris after having been made to assume the title of countess. She was forbidden to mention her mother's name, and requested to forget the island of barbarians where she was born. But in this letter, which had eluded the vigilance of the aunt's spies, Virginia not only described France and many things that Paul could have no knowledge of, but there was enclosed a small purse embroidered with the letters P and V in human hair, which he

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recognized as Virginia's own. Inside the purse was a collection of flower-seeds, and when Paul wrote he sent, in return, a packet of tropical seeds, which he hoped would remind her of her old home.

The agreed time for Virginia's return was approaching. Then at daybreak on Christmas Eve 1752 a white flag was seen streaming out from the flagstaff on an elevation called Mount Discovery. This was the signal announcing an approaching ship. Paul ran down to the shore and waited there all day, while the distant ship beat off the land. In the evening the pilot, who had set out in the morning, returned with letters, one of which was from Virginia saying that she was on board and would soon be with her loved ones. The letter informed them that her great-aunt had tried to force her into marrying in France, and on her refusing to comply had disinherited her and sent her packing back to the island.

But even while the little family were celebrating the news of Virginia's return the ship that brought her was in deadly peril and sending up signals of distress. The night was as black as a pit, and the heat was stifling—the prelude to a violent tempest. From the land the helpless people watched the signals of distress from the ship as she rolled in the heavy seas. Above the thunder of the breakers the silent watchers heard the boom of her guns, and Paul and his friend, who had come down to watch, remained, heedless of the storm, throughout the night. The tragic scene is swiftly moving forward to its conclusion. At dawn the beating of drums was heard in the woods behind, and shortly afterwards the governor, on horseback, accompanied by soldiers, appeared. The soldiers were ordered to fire a volley to let those on board the ship know that they had seen her signals and were standing by. An answering flash came from the sea, and through the driving spindrift the watchers saw the hull and rigging of the stricken vessel. Large fires were now kindled along the shore to hearten the ship's people.

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During the morning the wind increased in velocity, and the watchers recognized the signs of an approaching cyclone.



The ship was now clearly seen, her decks crowded with people, and from her bows and stern dragging four cables in an effort to avoid driving into the rocks. She was riding

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head to windward, her keel and forefoot frequently exposed as she rose from the boiling seas. With no room to tack she was slowly being forced on to the deadly lee shore, and when, as he watched, Paul saw her cables part he tried to throw himself into the sea and was only restrained by the watchers near him. Frantic with anguish, he attempted to swim out to the ship fast to a long rope held by a number of men, but he was almost immediately thrown back, half drowned and sorely battered, on to the rocks.

Now a fair young woman of extraordinary beauty is seen standing alone on the ship's stern gallery stretching out her white arms towards her lover. As the grief-stricken young man watches her wave an "eternal farewell" the ship is swallowed up by the violent seas. Paul is dragged from the breakers unconscious.

As the vessel was about to go down a huge, muscular sailor, stripped of his clothes, was seen to approach Virginia and respectfully offer to try to save her, beseeching her to allow him to make the attempt—"but she repelled him with dignity and turned her face from him."

After the storm had abated Virginia's body was found on the beach half covered with sand.

Her eyes were closed, but serenity sat on her forehead; only the pale violet of death blended itself upon her cheeks with the rose of modesty. One of her hands lay upon her clothes; the other, which clung to her breast, was firmly closed and stiff. I disengaged from it, with much difficulty, a little casket; but how was I astonished when I perceived in it the portrait which Paul had given her, and which she had promised him never to part with while she lived.

The tale is ended. No need to dwell on the devastating grief of Paul and the others, nor to go into the details of the funeral arrangements, with all the pomp of orthodox rites as prescribed by the governor himself. Paul seems at first beyond consoling, but for the second time in his brief life he recovers, under the philosophical tonic of his friend, the old man who tells the story. But the recovery was not



THE GRIEF OF PAUL
Adapted from an old print

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for long, for within two months of Virginia's passing Paul was dead. Eight days later his mother followed him, and she, in turn, was followed by Mme de la Tour, who died a month later.

By the side of Virginia, at the foot of the bamboos close to the little church at Pamplemousses, Paul was buried. Near by the two mothers were laid side by side. No stone is there to mark their graves, no scroll records their virtues, but in the hearts of those who knew and loved them they will live for ever.

With these words the old man, with tearful eyes, arose and departed.

That is all, reader, except that you may be interested to know that there exist on the island certain landmarks and mementoes of the tragic narrative. Near the Île d'Ambre is a place called the St Gerard's Pass, *St Gerard* being the name of the ill-fated ship. Northward of this pass is Cap Malheureux, and the bay where the body of Virginia was washed ashore is still known as the Baie du Tombeau.





CHAPTER VI

Queen of the Adriatic

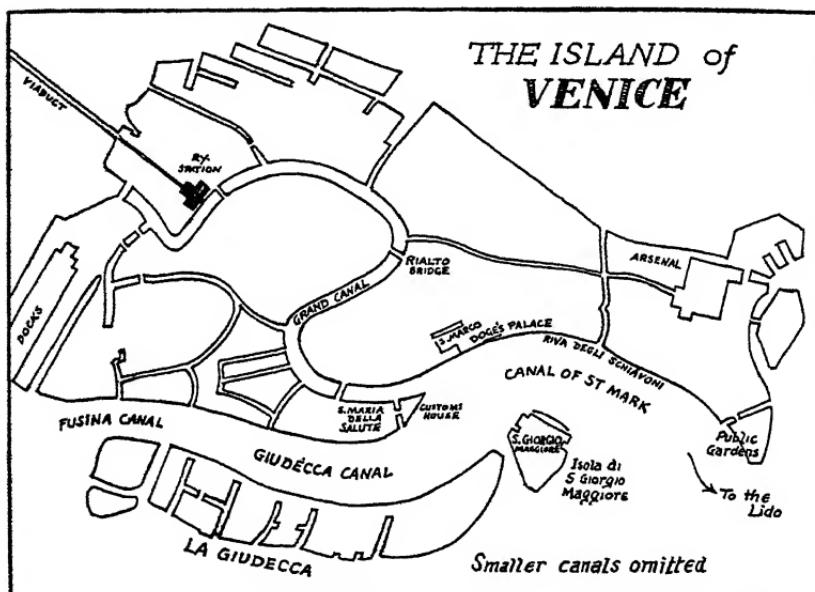
To Venice, the strangely floating city, the queen of the Adriatic!

HANS ANDERSEN

IN these days of cheap conducted tours to almost anywhere in the world there is nothing particularly original in having seen Venice. But because every other person you meet has probably fed the pigeons of St Mark's, because it is unoriginal, unadventurous, and 'trippery,' that is no good reason why you should deny yourself the supreme pleasure of seeing this one of the world's wonder-places. I have always found, no matter where I have been, that ten thousand have been there before me. All the best places have been done, and the only way to be original is to stay at home, which would be a pity. I have seen most of the show-places of Europe and America, and, far from feeling repentant, I would not have missed them for anything. It is senseless to cut off one's nose to spite one's face, and if you can't see Capri without the *nouveaux riches* from Wigan and Stepney, then see it with them, for Capri is too good to miss, no matter what the little highbrows may say. As for Venice, the would-be select have the Lido, where they (in the right season) may withdraw from the too insistent company of

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those with less money than themselves. The aristocratic 'grand tour' is no longer possible, for everybody's doing it. Lord Chesterfield would have been pained to see the mob that goes to Italy in these enlightened times, and might have felt persuaded to keep his son at home. Useless to protest at the invasion of the holy places, the hitherto private



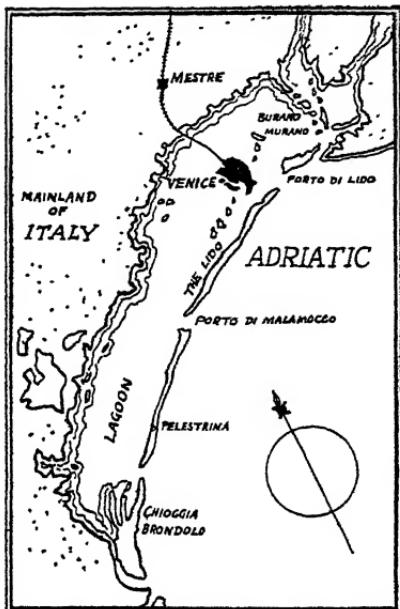
property of the privileged rich, for so long as money can be made in exploiting the holy places there will be companies ready to exploit them. And, what is almost worse, the *contadini*, the peasants, encourage this exploitation of their ancient treasures. Switzerland is a perfect example of this sort of thing. If they put any more strings of electric lights on the Burgenstock it will look like Luna Park. And the Hoheweg at Interlaken, seen at night from the summit of the Schynige Platte, reminds one of the Boulevard de Clichy.

And having said as much, I feel that we may proceed to the

QUEEN OF THE ADRIATIC

Venetian lagoon with a clear conscience. But why Venice in a book which concerns itself with islands? Is it possible that there is anyone who does not know that Venice is an island, and a most remarkable one? So remarkable that it is not only unique, but one of the loveliest islands in the whole world. Look at the accompanying maps, so considerately put in for your use, and see how the city is an island tethered to the mainland by the slender line of the railway viaduct as a ship is fast to a dock by a hawser.

The approach to Venice should be accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. Like Mont Saint-Michel, it bursts upon the traveller's vision, a dream-city rising out of the sea. No matter how it is approached one feels this sense of unreality, for it is not normal for cities to float on the surface of the sea. Approach it, like Portia, from Padua, by barge along the Brenta, through green fields to Fusina, and thence by ferry on the Giudecca Canal; or across the Adriatic from Trieste, whence the slender Campanile is sighted while the city still lies below the rim of the sea; or from the Alps to the north by the Brenner Pass, leaving the train at Mestre and embarking in a gondola to be rowed across the salt lagoon; or, more prosaically, by train across the viaduct. This last means of arrival is not without its reward, for as one steps out of the train after the long, dusty journey across Northern Italy one is instantly on the very brim of the sea, surrounded by water and boats. One sees for the first time the familiar painted mooring-posts and



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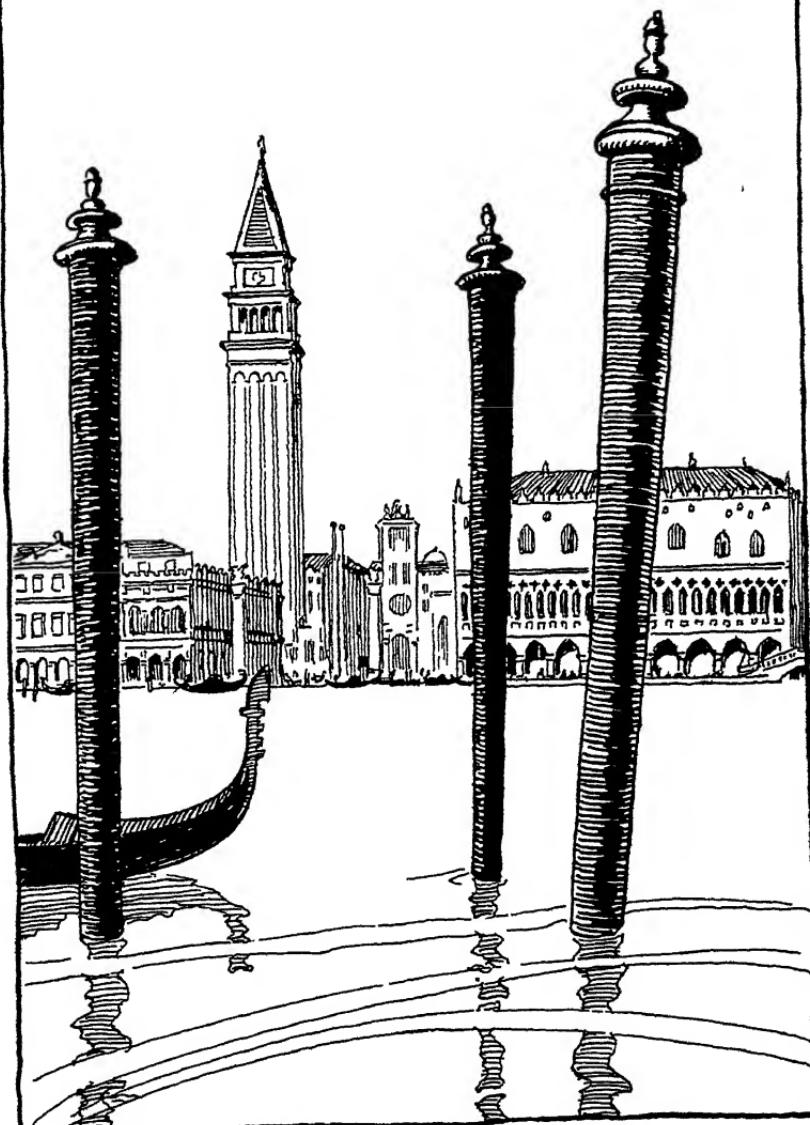
the gondolas, which, one is surprised to find, are a funereal black.

But it is best, if possible, to make Venetia's acquaintance by water, for then one sees to the best advantage this amazing towered island rising like Aphrodite from the sea. There is nothing quite like it in the world. It was inevitable that the tourist agencies should exploit the charms of such a place. Through posters the whole world has become familiar with the shape of the famous Campanile, with St Mark's, the Doges' Palace, and the gondolas. What with Herr Baedeker and the posters there appears little left for me to say about the city. But I am not dismayed, for it was not my intention to wander through the picture-galleries, the churches, and public buildings.

When one thinks of Venice one thinks of carnivals, tricorn hats, and masks, dominoes, Pulcinella, of *illustriſſimi* and *illustriſſime*, of doges, the Council of Ten, of gondolas, the Rialto, the Bridge of Sighs, and the Grand Canal, Venetian glass, Venetian lace, *palazzi*—oh, and Venetian red, familiar to the palettes of artists. Whence came this special tint, and whence the Titian red hair? In all Italy I have seen precious few red heads, though, oddly enough, a great number of blondes. In Venice, as elsewhere in Italy, the predominant colour of the hair is raven black.

The tourists miss nothing but the essence of Venice, and it has always been thus everywhere. They are taken out to the island Murano to see the famous glass-blowers; to the Armenian (Mechitarist) monastery on the island of San Lazzaro, where for a while Byron stayed and learned sufficient Armenian to do a few translations. (A theatrical gesture typical of the poet. The pious monks believed in his unquestionable sincerity, and to this day preserve his portrait, the pens, knife, inkstand, and table that he used.) They are shown the Bridge of Sighs and told how it got its name, shown the palaces along the Grand Canal, and have

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VENICE

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pointed out to them the Palazzo Rezzonico, where Robert Browning spent his last days. They are herded into St Mark's, and allowed to feed the pigeons in the astonishing tessellated square. They spoil the *gondolieri* by over-paying and over-tipping. They are told that the Campanile of St Mark was begun in the year 888, was rebuilt in 1329,



PIAZZA DI SAN MARCO

served as a watch-tower against invasion by sea, the watchman announcing the approach of all shipping by striking a bell that could be heard all over the city. They are told that Galileo used the tower for demonstrating his great invention, the telescope, and how at 9.30 in the morning of July 14, 1902, the old Campanile collapsed with a tremendous roar, miraculously without killing anyone, and how the city councillors convened at once and ordered that a new, and stronger, Campanile should be begun, and how it was finished on St Mark's day ten years later, and to celebrate

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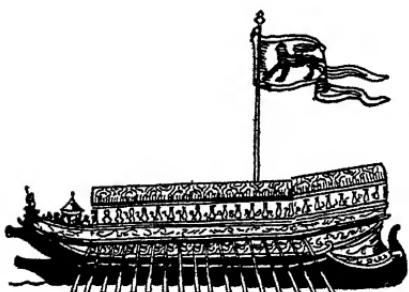
the event 2479 pigeons were released to carry the tidings all over Europe. And finally they are whisked, by electric lift, to the top, from which they may enjoy a marvellous view of the city and adjacent islands. To the east they see the long, low-lying sandbanks known as the Lido, which form a natural breakwater for Venice against the winter furies of the Adriatic. As the map shows, the chain of islands to the east and south forms the Venetian lagoon, in which the city lies like a moored ship. The Lido (or Bagni del Lido), known to the rest of Europe for its ostentatious luxury *plage*, is not in itself lovely, but as a bathing station for those who can afford to stay there it has few rivals. Here is what Goethe wrote of the Lido:

Yesterday I set out at an early hour with my tutelary genius for the Lido, the spit of land which encloses the lagoons, dividing them from the sea. . . . The Lido is at best but a sandbank. But the sea—it is a magnificent sight.

It is not pestered with quite so many mosquitoes as is Venice during the warm weather. In the city a sleeping-net is a *sine qua non* for the visitor, as the mosquitoes are plentiful and their bite is considered harmful. The bathing season lasts from July to the end of September. The sun is uncomfortably hot, but the sea is delightfully cool, and horse-back-riding on the sands is part of the health *régime* the rich cosmopolitan visitors there prescribe for themselves. A century ago the Lido was a dreary spot, frequented only by fishermen and an occasional milord who came to take a morning canter on the sands, for there were, of course, no horses in Venice. Byron was an almost daily rider there, and Robert Browning made a habit of going over to ride or walk. Steamers now do the traverse in half an hour. According to William Dean Howells, the distinguished American novelist, who spent some years in the consular service at Venice, there was in 1865 a stable in the public gardens in which were kept one or two horses. Can one

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imagine a city without a horse, a city where one goes visiting or shopping in boats, and where those who can afford it have their private gondola and gondolier, as elsewhere people have a car and chauffeur? A city where the market gardener brings his stuff in boats, where if you move your furniture to a new dwelling it goes in boats, where if you go to a dance



THE "BUCINTORO"

or to a funeral you go by water in gondola taxis or gondola hearses? At one time, over a century ago, a stuffed horse was exhibited by a travelling showman, as in England they would exhibit a stuffed mermaid or a two-headed calf. Mrs Piozzi wrote in 1785

anent horses in Venice, "One

has heard of a horse being exhibited there, and yesterday I watched the poor people paying a penny a-piece for the sight of a stuffed one." Not, mark you, that Venice is without streets, but they are so narrow, so tortuous and so short and so prone to end in *culs-de-sac* that a carriage there would be useless.

The water carnival, the regatta, is said to have originated among the lagoons of Venice. This according to Mutinelli (*Annali Urbani de Venezia*). The famous *Bucintaur* (*Bucintoro*) was the nuptial barge in which the Doge went to wed the city to the sea. The *Bucintaur* was a galley—*i.e.*, propelled by oars—200 feet long, with two decks, on the first of which sat 160 rowers—four men to an oar—and on the upper deck sixty rowers. There were also forty sailors, as well as a number of officers. Under a canopy on the highly ornate stern sat the Doge on his throne, and above him flew the banner of St Mark. The curving prow was of the kind known as double-beaked, and along the sides were the carved figures of Peace, Justice, Sea, Land, and other allegorical creations. The roofed upper deck was supported by gilded

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caryatids, the roof being a canopy of gold-embroidered crimson velvet.

The water carnival, or regatta, of unforgettable splendour and importance to the Venetians was that which celebrated the Venetian part in the Christian victory over the Turks at the battle of Lepanto. But the most lavishly dressed of all the forty-one regattas since the first one, in 1315, was that given by Duke Ernest of Brunswick in 1686. There were floats (one perceives the origin of the name) representing such scenes as the Judgment of Paris, the Triumph of the Marine Goddesses, of Neptune, etc., when every bit of known deep-sea mythology was represented. Another feature was a gigantic wooden whale supporting a monument of tritons and dolphins surmounted by Neptune and drawn by sea-horses.

The graceful gondola is a direct descendant of the medieval boats of Venice, and was at one time painted in bright colours like the modern Sicilian cart, but by order of a certain Doge of austere character an edict went forth declaring that the gaudy colours were immoral and that the vessels henceforth must be painted black. Byron wrote of gondolas:

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe,—
But not to them do woeful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral's done.¹

¹ *Beppo*.



ARGOSY

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An island lying within a lagoon! With such a beginning a city could hardly help becoming one of the show-places of the world. But in the brave old days, when fighting was the only occupation of a gentleman, the city was too busy defending herself, and, shall we say, developing her character, to think of tourists. She is a little changed now—less virile and more picturesque, but it is the picturesqueness of decay.

It is sad to see a noble city¹ become one of the world's side-shows, and more so when one reflects on her impressive and stormy history.

The land areas have been frequently devastated by wars, but in spite of this the ancient city grew rich; hence the Venetian argosies. In early times, after the downfall of Rome, the lagoon people, a semi-barbaric race, threw off all allegiance to their mainland masters, and fortified their islands with dykes of wattle, rock, and mud. The first elected Doge, Paoluccio Anafesto, defiantly refused to recognize the Roman emperors as his superiors, and did heroic work in fortifying the city as well as seeing to its civic welfare with dykes, bridges, canals, and palaces. In keeping with the spirit of the age, the citizens had a patron, a rallying cry, and found it in St Mark.² Two Venetian traders, during a visit to Alexandria, stole from under the very noses of the Moslems the body of St Mark, and contrived to carry it back to Venice, where it was received with great ceremony, and a chapel built to receive it. From that time onward the rallying cry in the lagoons was *Viva San Marco!*

The government was oligarchic, and the people were a proud, independent race, and naturally sailors. The Doge Pietro Orseolo II (991) assumed the title of Duke of Venice, and it was he who instituted the ceremony which developed

¹ Actually there are three places in Northern Italy bearing the name, or, as the Italians say, *tre Venexie*: the area of the lagoons, Tridentina (part of Tyrol), Giulia (Fiume and Istria).

² St Theodore had been their ancient patron, but he was abandoned for St Mark.

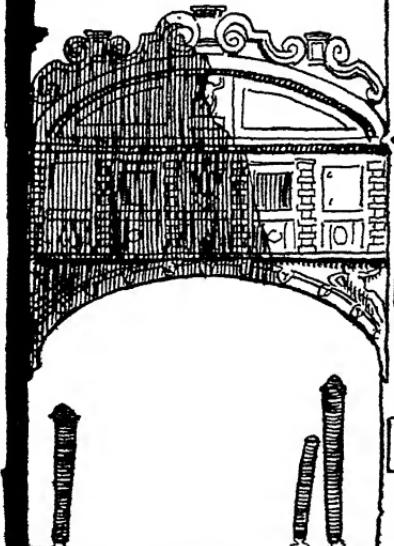
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into the famous espousal of Venice with the Adriatic each year on Ascension Day. For a thousand years the city remained inviolate, and the first foreign conqueror to tread the Rialtine isles was Napoleon Bonaparte during his Italian campaign in 1797. This marked the end of the Venetian republic and the end of one of the last free cities. During the war the city was once in peril of invasion by the Austrian hordes from the north, but was saved by the Italians after a series of bloody battles.

I am going now, by a series of selected quotations, to let other people describe the city. There is certainly no paucity of material. Rather have I suffered from an embarrassment of choice, for every person of note seems to have been there at least once during his life. Among the artists are Turner, Bonington (who died there), Whistler, Ruskin, and Sargent, whose diploma picture in the Royal Academy was a painting of the interior of the Palazzo Barbaro. Turner visited the city in the eighteen-thirties, when he was approaching sixty, and did some of his most remarkable work there, idealizing the scene, casting over what he saw the spell of his unrivalled imagination.

Byron arrived there in 1816, at the age of twenty-eight, and at once threw himself with fiery enthusiasm into the social life of the city, not forgetting the pretty signorinas. He wrote to Tom Moore in November:

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHES



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It is my intention to remain at Venice during the winter, probably as it has always been (next to the East) the greenest island of my imagination. It has not disappointed me; though its evident decay would, perhaps, have that effect upon others. But I have been familiar with ruins too long to dislike desolation. Besides, I have fallen in love, which next to falling into the canal (which would be of no use, as I can swim) is the best or the worst thing I could do.

The lady, whom he describes, is the wife of his landlord, a merchant of Venice. The story of this particular *amour* may be found in verse in *Beppo*. His next visit to Venice was two years later, and, though marked by less gaiety, was done in a grander manner. Wherever he went he was a lion, a rather melancholy lion, which, of course, made him the more attractive. At another time he wrote:

Venice . . . is a poetical place; and classical, to us, from Shakespeare and Otway. . . . Venice pleases me as much as I expected, and I expected much. It is one of those places which I know before I see them, and has always haunted me the most, after the East.

And this, the opening stanza of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, after the second visit:

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A Palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the Enchanter's wand:
A thousand Years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her
hundred isles.

His friend Shelley describes his first impressions in a letter to Peacock:

Venice is a wonderfully fine city. The approach to it over the laguna, with its domes and turrets glittering in a long line over the blue waves, is one of the finest architectural delusions in the world.

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It seems to have—and literally it has—its foundations in the sea. The silent streets are paved with water, and you hear nothing but the dashing of the oars, and the occasional cries of the *gondolieri*. . . . The gondolas themselves are things of a most romantic and picturesque appearance; I can only compare them to moths of which a coffin might have been the chrysalis. They are hung with black, and painted black, and carpeted with grey; they curl at the prow and stern, and at the former there is a nondescript beak of shining steel, which glitters at the end of its long black mass.

And, in verse, the view from the Lido:¹

Paved with the image of the sky . . . the hoar
And airy Alps towards the North appeared
Through mist, and heaven-sustaining bulwark reared
Between the East and West; and half the sky
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
Down the steep West into a wondrous hue
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
Among the many-folded hills: they were
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,
The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—
And then—as if the Earth and Sea had been
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen
Those mountains towering as from waves of flame
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
Their very peaks transparent.

News of the loveliness of Venice must have reached Shakespeare, for he praises it on more than one occasion:

If Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice.

And:

I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice;
Vinegia, Vinegia,
Chi non te verde, ei non te pregia.

¹ Shelley's daughter Clara, who died in Venice in 1818, was buried under the sands of the Lido.

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And Spenser:

Fayre Venice, flower of the last world's delight.

To come down to more contemporary sentiment, here are two of Ruskin's little word-pictures, the first from *Stones of Venice*:

Venice . . . a ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak—so quiet,—so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City, and which the Shadow. . . .

This from an essay on the Rialto Bridge:

Could I but place the reader at the early morning on the quay below the Rialto, when the market boats, full laden, float into groups of golden colour: and show him the purple of the grapes and the figs, and the glowing of the scarlet gourds carried away in long streams upon the waves: and among them, the crimson fish baskets, plashing and sparkling, and flaming as the morning sun falls on their wet tawny sides: and above, the painted sails of the fishing boats, orange and white, scarlet and blue: and better than all such florid colour, the naked bronzed, burning limbs of the seamen, the last of the old Venetian race, who yet keep the right Giorgione colour on their brows and bosoms!

Samuel Rogers, the poet whom some thought competent to be Poet Laureate, saw Venice as a city of the sea:

There is a glorious City in the Sea.
The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,
Ebbing and flowing; and the salt sea-weed
Clings to the marble of her palaces.
No track of men, no footsteps to and fro,
Lead to her gates. The path lies o'er the sea.

Night over the lagoon has evoked the passionate admiration of all but the most phlegmatic of travellers. This is how it affected George Sand:

Night in Venice: the brilliant stars twinkle in the pools of water left on the marshes by the sea, the breeze murmurs in the green seaweeds. From time to time we see the light from a gondola

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moving over the water. The voice of the Adriatic breaking on the opposite shores of the Lido comes to us in a monotonous and majestic sound.

And here is Benjamin Disraeli's picture:

How beautiful is night in Venice! Then music and the moon reign supreme; the glittering sky reflected in the waters, and every gondola gliding with sweet sounds! around on every side are palaces and temples, rising from the waves which they shadow with their solemn forms, their costly fronts rich with the spoils of Kingdoms, and softened with the magic of the midnight beam. The whole city, too, is pouring forth for festival.

Among the best-known of the English residents of Venice were, of course, the Brownings. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote to a friend in England:

I have been between heaven and earth since our arrival at Venice. The heaven of it is ineffable. Never had I touched the skirts of so celestial a place. The beauty of its architecture, the silver trails of water up between all that gorgeous colouring and carving, the enchanting silence, the moonlight, the music, the gondolas—I mix it all up together, and maintain that nothing is like it, nothing equal to it, not a second Venice in the world.

Does not that bear out what they all say—that Venice is unique? To go there and cavil about its shortcomings, the decay of its back areas, and the presence of mosquitoes is to be a Philistine indeed.

Robert Browning died in the Palazzo Rezzonico, which is on the Grand Canal, on December 12, 1889. A memorial tablet is now on the wall of the palace, put there by the municipality of Venice:

Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it 'Italy.'

Richard Wagner, needing quiet, and hearing that Venice was one of the quietest cities in the world, went there in 1858. While there he wrote part of *Tristan und Isolde*. If, as some think, the English seemed out of place in Italy, with

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their puzzling reserve, how much more so the Germans! But Wagner was no ordinary *tedesco*. The ways of the English have always been incomprehensible to the Continental and the American minds. William Dean Howells, writing of the English in Venice, has something both illuminating and interesting to say—this in the sixties of last century:

The truth is, Americans do not like these people, and I believe there is no love lost on the other side. But, in many things, they are travellers to be honoured, if not liked: they voyage through all countries, and without awaking fervent affection in any land through which they pass; but their sterling honesty and truth have made the English tongue a draft upon the unlimited confidence of the continental peoples, and French, Germans, and Italians trust and respect private English faith as cordially as they hate public English perfidy.¹

And Casanova, himself a Venetian who had been for a time in England, compared his own townsfolk with the English, to the former's disadvantage. It was on the occasion of his arrest by order of the Council of Ten. Descending the stairs, he found forty archers waiting. Two would have been sufficient to secure him, and caustically he writes in his famous memoirs:

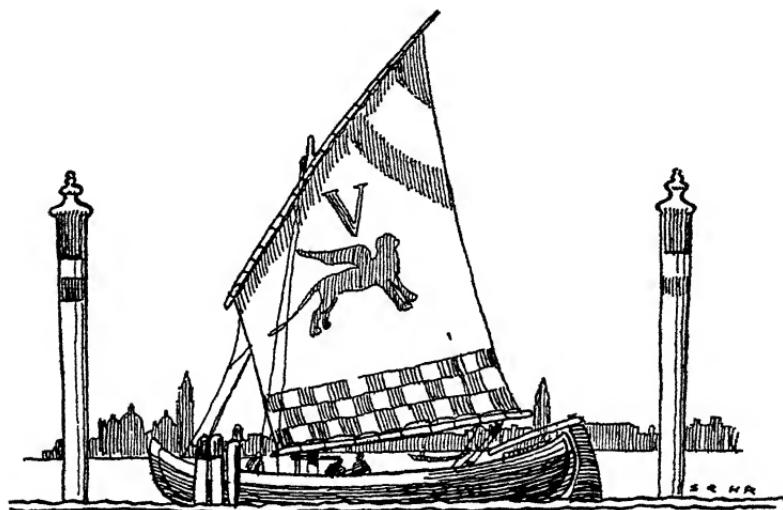
It is strange enough that in London, where every one is brave, only one man is employed to arrest another; while in my native city of Venice, where most men are cowards, thirty are not enough.

This makes pleasant reading for an *inglese*, but it does not alter the fact that abroad he is not at his best, if we exclude the small group of people who are sympathetic to foreign ways and ideals, or, at least, approach them with understanding. There is no doubt at all that cheap trips abroad do not help English prestige. The crude behaviour of the Anglo-Saxon in Boulogne on a cheap day-excursion is as inimical in its effect on British prestige as the reserved self-

¹ *Venetian Life*.

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sufficiency of the English *pensionnaire* in Switzerland or Italy. It is not without a shadow of reason that they caricatured us as a long-toothed, long-chinned, long-nosed, silly, and conceited people. We know that we are neither better nor worse than our foreign neighbours, but the fact is they see us that way, and we must have given them some small



reason. I remember standing one day in a railway booking-office in Florence when an Englishman in khaki shorts, and with long hair and heavy-bridged *pince-nez*, strode in and shouted in English for the manager. Fortunately the youthful clerk had some English, and he was able to answer the strident ass quietly, but as he did so he slowly winked across at me, and I felt ashamed of my countryman, and ashamed of myself for being ashamed. He would have brazened it out, and called them, I have no doubt, a lot of blasted dagos.

One need have no illusions to love and understand a people. What if their ways are not our ways? They would not be so ill-mannered as to come to our country and tell us we were wrong. Environment and climate make character,

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and to be logical one should criticize the climate before one criticizes the man. Howells loved the Venetians, even when he gently poked fun at them. He tells how his "Venetian neighbours have the amiable custom of studying one another's features through opera-glasses," and, writing of the public gardens, describes sympathetically a typically Latin scene:

The company is commonly stupid, but one evening, as we strolled idly through the walks, we came upon an interesting group—forty or fifty sailors, soldiers, youth of the people, grey-haired fishermen and *contadini*—sitting and lying on the grass, and listening with rapt attention to an old man reclining against a tree. I never saw a manner of sweeter or easier dignity than the speaker's. Nature is so lavish of her grace to these people that grow near her heart—the sun! Infinite study could not have taught one northern-born the charm of oratory as this old man displayed it. I listened and heard that he was speaking Tuscan. Do you guess with what he was enchanting his simple auditors? Nothing less than *Orlando Furioso*. They listened with the hungriest delight, and when Ariosto's interpreter raised his finger and said, "Disse l'imperatore," or, "Orlando disse, 'Carlomano mio,'" they hardly breathed.

Could any scene be more delightfully Latin?

One night, after I had been watching the boats pass under one of the bridges, I walked along a dim-lit passage into a little open square, attracted by the plaintive notes of a guitar. And there in the moonlight, sitting on a low stone wall, was a man singing *Il Trovatore*, and surrounded by a handful of silent people, most of them poor. He continued to sing in a soft tenor voice, not too loud, but with a marvellous range, and I, ordinarily a Philistine in opera, was entranced. Never had I really cared for opera until I heard it sung to the accompaniment of a guitar in the open air under the stars of an Italian night.

Little wonder that Byron, Shelley, Wagner, Browning, Howells, and the rest of that noble company loved Venice and the *dolce far niente* of their Italian days! "See Paris

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and die," I used to be told in my childhood, but they'd have done better to substitute Venice. And now to end a pæan of praise with Shelley's farewell to Venice, from his *Julian and Maddalo*:

If I had been an unconnected man,
I, from this moment, should have formed some plan
Never to leave sweet Venice: for to me
It was delight to ride by the lone sea:
An then the town is silent—one may write,
Or read in gondolas by day or night,
Having the little brazen lamp alight,
Unseen, uninterrupted:—books are there,
Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair
Which were twin-born with poetry;—and all
We seek in towns, with little to recall
Regret for the green country . . .
But I had friends in London too . . .
—The following morning, urged by my affairs,
I left bright Venice.

As supplementary matter to this chapter I intended all along to give a short history of the amazing experiences and escape of Casanova from the *piombi* while a prisoner of the Doge. But I am filled with shame and apprehension at what I am about to do, which is something analogous to descending from the sublime to the ridiculous—or should it be sordid? The curious episode I am about to narrate from the memoirs of Casanova de Seingalt has no relationship to what has gone before except that it took place in Venice. For if Spenser's "Fayre Venice, flower of the last world's delight," had its darker side you may be sure Casanova was the man to find it.

Born in Venice in 1725, the son of a patrician father and a plebeian mother, the daughter of a cobbler, he was given a gentleman's education, but from the age of sixteen, when he was expelled from the Academy of St Cyprian in Venice for immoral and scandalous conduct, his wayward disposition led him into frequent trouble wherever he went. After

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visiting, as a gentleman of fortune, most of the capitals of Europe, at the age of thirty-one he returned to Venice, where he met with the major adventure of his life. He had left Rome as a priest, but changed his cassock for the tunic

of a soldier, and from that to the robes of an advocate—too restless to remain loyal to anything for long. His biographers are unanimous in describing him as pleasure-loving, gay, bold, cynical, reckless, but his remarkable intelligence and enterprise seem to have been overlooked—two qualities that he is shown to possess in abundant measure during his incarceration in Venice.



GIOVANNI JACOPO CASANOVA
DE SEINGALT

On his return to his native city it was not long before he was in trouble. This time it was a dispute with an *abbé* named Chiari, but this squabble was quickly overshadowed by a greater matter: no less than an order for his arrest from the dreaded Tribunal on charges of magic, heresy, and treason. His lodgings were visited by the authorities during his absence, and he returned to find the rooms in disorder. Warned by friends to cross to the mainland and escape, with characteristic recklessness he disregarded the advice, and early the next morning was awakened by the knockings of the guard come to arrest him, by order of the Council of Ten, a secret tribunal from whom no man was safe, and whose reputation compared with that of the terrible Inquisitions of Madrid and Lisbon.

Casanova never, throughout his autobiography, pretends to be an angel—in fact, one feels that he sometimes exaggerates his peccadilloes, as, for example, when he writes, “Nor was there in Venice a greater libertine than I.” But for once he appears to have been entirely innocent of any

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transgression, and his bitterness is proportionate to the injustice done by the Tribunal. Ever a stickler for form and appearance, he makes the guard wait as he dresses, carefully putting on his best ruffled shirt and laced coat. Downstairs he finds forty archers waiting, and it is here in his confessions he makes the comparison, already quoted, between his countrymen and the English.

He is first taken in a gondola by the chief of the archers, Messer Grande, to the latter's house, and locked in a room, while the chief reports the arrest to the Tribunal. During the afternoon Messer Grande returns, with orders to conduct Casanova to the famous *piombi*, the dark rooms under the leads, or the roof, of the city prison. As the roof of the prison was sheathed in lead, and its cells were a series of dark holes at the very top of the building under the roof, and corresponding to the dungeons of other prisons, they came to be known as 'under the leads,' or simply the *piombi*, but by whichever name their reputation was sinister enough.

By gondola, the aquatic Black Maria of Venice, the prisoner is taken to the Doges' Palace, where he is formally arraigned before the Secretary to the Council of Ten, who adjures Messer Grande to keep the prisoner safe. He is now marched through the building and across the famous Bridge of Sighs, beloved of tourists, which spans the Rio di Palazzo between the palace and the prison. Casanova is turned over to the gaoler of the *piombi*, a stupid, dishonest fellow named Lorenzo, who, with sly innuendoes and smirks, conducts his prisoner up many stairs and along half-lighted corridors to a "dirty attic, about thirty-six feet long by twelve feet wide, lighted by windows high in the roof." Here the gaoler, taking up a big bunch of keys, unlocks a low door, three and a half feet high, a door lined with iron and having a hole in it about eight inches square, through which food can be passed without the necessity of unlocking it.

Casanova found himself thrust into this cheerless, box-like apartment, and the door was quickly slammed behind

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him. In the darkness, half lighted by a small window obscured by a beam, he saw that the room contained no furniture or fittings other than a shelf and a bucket. It being then midsummer, the heat of the place was almost unbearable, and, to add further to the prisoner's wretchedness, enormous rats were everywhere. For many hours the gaoler, Lorenzo, whom Casanova was to get to know so well, left him alone to roast in the dark inferno without food, water, or bedding. Food he did not desire, but water he craved for, and shouted and stamped until he sank exhausted to the floor. At midnight the bell of St Mark's near by awakened him, and for the rest of the night he sat sleepless, until, at half-past five in the morning, the sound of bolts being drawn announced the return of Lorenzo. This unspeakable fellow informed Casanova that he would bring food, but it must be paid for first, and that he, the prisoner, could also write out a list of furniture and other necessaries which he could buy, but that books, paper, pens, a razor, a fork, a knife, and a looking-glass were forbidden. Some hours later a table, a chair, and a bed were brought in, also the first meal, which had to be eaten with an ivory spoon, as forks and knives were forbidden, as already stated.

Thereafter Lorenzo makes but one visit each day, at sunrise, leaving the prisoner entirely alone for over twenty-three hours. The first day was almost worse than the first night, so hot and punctuated by the shattering sound of St Mark's bell, which seemed immediately over the cell. The second night there was no sleep for rats, fleas, and the terrible bell, which he knew he must get used to or go mad. On the gaoler's third visit he brought two books, *The Mystic City*, by a certain Sister Maria, and also the work of a monk, Caravita, called *The Adoration of the Sacred Heart*, hardly acceptable mental pabulum to a man of Casanova's disposition. But, with many cynical outbursts, he spent a week reading in the dim light *The Mystic City*, a work which, if sent by his gaolers for his spiritual regeneration, seemed to

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have had the opposite effect. Whatever else he was, Casanova was neither weakling nor poltroon, and doubtless his stubborn refusal to compromise with the powers that be frequently made his path harder than it need have been.

After ten days under the leads his money had gone, and he was reduced to the very trifling daily amount allowed prisoners by the Tribunal. This sum, worth perhaps two shillings, was spent for the prisoners by the crafty Lorenzo, who saw to it that part of this meagre allowance found its way into his own pocket. Nor had the prisoners any redress. Casanova began to suffer in the almost insupportable heat, and at last became so ill that a doctor was brought in, a wise medico who prescribed lemonade and bleeding. After four visits the prisoner's fever left him, and he began to recover. It was now early in September, and each day Casanova had looked forward to being liberated, since he was innocent of the charge (of being a spy) that had brought about his arrest. It was at the end of this month that he had an experience that made him think the day of doom had come. Sitting alone in his cell, he saw the beam above his head begin to move, then felt the walls and floor of the prison rock until it seemed as though they must collapse. Afterwards he learned that Venice had been visited by the edge of the earth tremors that had destroyed Lisbon.

As the weeks went by and the Tribunal showed no signs of ordering his release he began the plans for escape which were consummated so brilliantly some months later after almost insuperable obstacles had been surmounted. With neither money to bribe the guard nor tools of any kind, escape seemed at first utterly impossible, but chance was shortly to put in his path the means which was eventually to lead to freedom. Meanwhile another prisoner was sent to share his cell. He had been four months in what was known as the worst cell in the prison, when the prisoner, a young valet to a count, and who had taken some of his master's jewels and eloped with his daughter, was brought

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in. The youth was later sentenced to fifteen years for his sin of loving too passionately. About this time Casanova was told that he might each day walk up and down within the attic outside his cell for half an hour as exercise—a privilege somewhat angrily accepted. For a time after this another prisoner, a thoroughly stupid creature and a rogue to boot, was sent to share the cell of the fastidious Casanova, who, however, suffered the added indignity with outbursts of heartless raillery or with contemptuous silence.

On January 1, 1756, when the cold of winter made his dark cell almost as unhabitable as did the heat of the Venetian summer, he was allowed to receive some warm clothes and books from friends outside. And now, as though with the coming of the new year his fortunes had changed for the better, he found one day, while exercising in the attic, a piece of black marble and an iron bolt about twenty inches long and the thickness of a walking-stick. In these innocent objects his fertile mind saw the ultimate means of escape. To his cell he smuggled the two treasures, and, once alone, began the laborious work of rubbing down the end of the iron bar on the fragment of marble, using spittle as a lubricant. Each day, working in almost complete darkness, for in the winter but little light entered the cell, he ground down a facet on the bar until, at the end of eight days of continuous labour, he had an eight-sided point like an octagonal stiletto, and fraught with untold usefulness as an escaping weapon. After it was finished to his satisfaction Casanova concealed it under the seat of his armchair. Seeing no better plan, he decided to pick a hole in the floor of the cell and let himself down into the room below some night, with the bed-sheet, and from there escape. Just how would have to be decided when the moment came. Meanwhile the hole, as it progressed, was made under the bed, the bed being moved for the purpose and pushed back before the hour for the gaoler's daily visit. During the winter for nineteen hours of each day the cell was in darkness, a state

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of affairs that caused Casanova to devise a lamp, which, though as crude as an Eskimo's, served to dispel much of the intolerable gloom and permit the work of digging through the floor and marble ceiling below to be carried out with greater dispatch. For a time a Jew, who is sent to share the cell, and whom Casanova does not trust, holds up the work of digging, but when he is removed the patient and determined plotter again takes up his solitary labour. In three weeks he has pierced three heavy planks, emptying the splinters each morning behind some rubbish in the big attic where he takes the half-hour's exercise. The poor light is at these times an aid to his movements going undetected. Each plank is of larch and sixteen inches wide. The splinters are carefully collected into a cloth. Beneath the planks he finds a slab of marble so obdurate that his soft iron bar will not penetrate it until it has first been softened with vinegar, which he specially requests to be supplied with his food, on the plea that it is necessary to his health.

At last the marble ceiling of the room below is cautiously pierced, and by peeping through the tiny hole Casanova discovers that he is immediately above the chamber of the Inner Council—the Council of Three. He fixes on a certain night to make the final breach, but two days before the time he has fixed for escaping he is suddenly transferred to another cell on the floor below, a lighter, cleaner place with two windows. In vain he pleads to be left where he is. Such a fantastic request merely makes Lorenzo look at him as one bereft of his sense. However, Lorenzo is not left wondering for long, as on moving Casanova's bed the hole is discovered. The prisoner waits in his new cell, expecting he knows not what. Lorenzo's fury on discovering the hole is murderous, and he threatens Casanova with terrible retribution, demands to see the tools the hole was made with, and searches the room. But he fails to look under the arm-chair, and Casanova refuses to enlighten the baffled villain. Furthermore, he saves himself from the vengeance of the

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Tribunal by swearing to Lorenzo that if he informs the Council he, Casanova, will say that the gaoler supplied the tools for a bribe. Since this would mean some dire punishment, possibly death, Lorenzo's mouth is sealed, but he contrives for a time to vent his hate on Casanova in serving him with vile food and sour wine. The prisoner, in his new cell, discovers that the cell above is occupied by a rascally friar named Balbi, whom he decides to use for his escape plan. By means of an exchange of books, in the linings of which they conceal tiny notes, the pair are able to communicate with each other, Casanova using one of his own finger-nails, allowed to grow long and sharpened, for a pen, and the juice of fruit for ink. Taking his orders from Casanova, the friar, to whom the iron bar has been smuggled by a most ingenious and daring ruse, is instructed to dig a hole in the ceiling of Casanova's cell. Balbi during the course of this work dislodges no less than thirty-six small bricks, and covers the hole made with a large religious print, which, of course, no one would think of disturbing. All this trickery and digging was only possible because of the stupidity of Lorenzo and his assistants, who were easily hoodwinked by the crafty Casanova and the friar. Both parties had a companion in their cells, but, for the sake of brevity, their part in the business need not be dwelt on, as neither had the nerve to escape when the hour came. The hole was broken through at the end of October, and the two plotters got their first view of each other. Soradaci, the other occupant of Casanova's cell, a cowardly rogue and an ex-barber, is bidden to cut their beards, in order that they will not attract notice in an age when beards are not fashionable. A hundred yards of rope was made, of sheets and blankets torn in strips and tied together, a work that occupied four of the precious hours allowed them before the gaoler would discover the hole.

Leaving Soradaci with threats of bloody vengeance if he gave the alarm, the pair of escapers with the iron bar drove

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a hole through the rotten timbers and lead of the roof and climbed through. So far the escape savours of the miraculous, or at least of incredible wit, organization, and luck, whereas it was nothing more than the result of months of thought and intelligent planning. Casanova, as the leader, left nothing to luck. He tied all the knots himself and thought out every move, as their lives depended on success. There could be no thought of failure. Casanova resolved to kill himself rather than be taken alive. The other prisoner in Balbi's cell was an old man, a Count Asquino, from whom Casanova borrowed two sequins before leaving. Whatever else he was Casanova was a courageous man. Soradaci, livid with fear, had begged him to give up the plan, but he might as well have begged him to stop breathing. Casanova leaves all his books and a few other trifles to the old Count, and before quitting his cell for the last time writes a letter to the Council, which he entrusts to the coward Soradaci, and of which the following is a portion:

Their Excellencies the State Inquisitors have the right to do their best to keep the guilty by force under the Leads; the prisoner, happy not to be on parole, has the right to do all in his power to gain his liberty. Their right is founded on justice; the prisoner's on nature; and just as they do not request his consent before locking him up, he does not ask theirs in order to recover his liberty.

Giovanni Casanova, writing this in the bitterness of his heart, knows that he may have the misfortune to be recaptured before he can get clear away from the Republic and find security in a hospitable country, and that he will be at the mercy of those he hopes to escape from; but if such ill-fortune overtakes him, he begs the humanity of his peers not to revenge themselves on him for giving way to natural instincts. If he is retaken he pleads the return of his possessions left behind in the cell; but if he is so fortunate as to succeed he leaves everything¹ to Francesco Soradaci, who remains behind because he had not sufficient courage to make the attempt. He does not prefer, as I do, his freedom to his life. Casanova begs your Highnesses not to refuse Soradaci this gift.

¹ Everything, that is, except the things he had given to Count Asquino.

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Written in the dark, one hour before midnight, in Count Asquino's cell, October 31, 1756.

He left the letter with the trembling Soradaci, instructing him to give it personally to the prison secretary. The friar turned out to be vain and stupid and cowardly, a combination that nearly brought disaster upon the pair before the adventure was ended. The hole in the roof was made two hours after sunset, when darkness was counted on for safety, but, to the couple's dismay, a clear moon was shining, and further precious hours had to be wasted waiting for the moon to set, as any movement on the roof would have been seen from the street. All Venice seemed to be in the square below, and Casanova remarks that had they ventured on to the roof their shadows would have instantly shown upon the ground. He counted, however, on seven and a half hours of total darkness after the moon had set.

When the monk sees the height of the roof from the ground he is overcome with vertigo, and bitterly upbraids Casanova for leading him into such peril. But this is no time for argument, and when the moon sets the leader grimly begins the hazardous crawl over the roof, with Balbi timorously following. The monk, by accident, drops his hat and bundle, an omen he regards as boding no good, but Casanova scoffs, pointing out that he should be grateful that they have fallen into the canal and not into a courtyard or public way, where they would almost certainly be discovered by somebody.

It was soon found that any idea of escape down the outer walls was out of the question: they were too high, and, furthermore, offered no place from which to hang a rope. Casanova, leaving the monk cursing at their ill-luck, crept along the gable until he perceived a dormer window on the canal side, and two-thirds of the way down the leads. Sliding down to this, and incidentally all but going over the edge of the roof, he spent half an hour breaking open the dormer window before returning to report to Balbi, whom

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he found almost helpless with fear and rage. The monk is let down through the window by one of the 'ropes,' and finds the dormer is fifty feet above the floor below, a statement no one can doubt who has been inside one of the old Italian *palazzi*. How Casanova got down into the room is an adventure in itself. It was too far to jump, and there was no one to hold the rope for him. Climbing back to the ridge, he found a ladder by a cupola, and, after narrowly escaping falling off the roof, got it down through the dormer window and so into the room. By forcing the door of this chamber, which appeared empty, with the crowbar they found themselves in another room, which was furnished. Here Casanova fell asleep from exhaustion and slept for three and a half hours, until awakened at 5 A.M. by the anxious friar. Forcing another door with the faithful bar, they entered a small room, where, on a table, was found a key which unlocked a door opening into a corridor which ended at the head of a narrow stone staircase. At the foot of the stairs was a door leading into the office of the Doge. There was also a window, but it was deemed too dangerous to descend by this into the courtyard. An attempt was made to force the door, but the lock proved too sturdy, and Casanova, without further hesitation, attacked the panelling with the bar. There was the risk of the noise arousing the guard, but the risk had to be taken. In half an hour a ragged hole was made large enough to admit a man, and the pair went through, though in doing so Casanova, who had to be pulled through by the friar, had his legs severely lacerated by the splintered wood.

At long last, after descending more steps to the main staircase, they found themselves confronted by the locked doors of the principal entrance to the building—the last barrier to freedom. It was now 6.30 A.M., and Casanova decided that their only chance was to sit down and await the arrival of the morning cleaners, when they must slip out instantly the door was opened. Balbi, in terror of capture,

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again bitterly reproached his companion for leading him to such a foolhardy adventure. Casanova regarded him calmly, and remarks in his confessions that, though the fellow was unscratched and his dress unharmed, he looked the peasant he was, while he, Casanova, was in tatters and bleeding from severe lacerations. But his *sang-froid* never deserted him, and he improved the time of waiting in bandaging his legs with strips of handkerchief and putting on the fine clothes he had clung to during the perilous journey from the leads. The old clothes were discarded and left in a corner, a present to the Doge. He remarks that they made an absurd-looking pair—the monk wearing Casanova's silk cloak, while he himself, in a tricorn hat with Spanish gold point and a white feather, ruffled shirt, and skirted coat, had his knees swathed in torn rags.

Looking through a window, he is seen by idlers in the square, who inform the guard. The fugitives hear the rattle of keys as the soldier approaches. Casanova, desperate, is ready with his iron bar, while the trembling monk crouches near. The door is flung open, and the astonished guard sees two queer figures walk past him into the street, neither hurrying nor looking back.

They were not followed immediately, and at the quay (never far in Venice) Casanova hailed an early-morning gondola. "Take me to Fusina, and get another man to assist you," Casanova tells the gondolier, but half-way across the lagoon he orders them to make for Mestre. No boats are following, and the fugitives begin to breathe more freely. At Mestre the gondoliers are rewarded generously and dismissed. Here, unable to hire horses, the pair order a carriage for Treviso, and are once more on their way, but not without narrowly escaping arrest, thanks to the imbecility of the monk. Casanova had grown sick of the fellow's stupidity, for he was more of a danger than a help, but even the cynical, impatient adventurer could not bring himself to abandon the creature until he was safely in neutral territory.

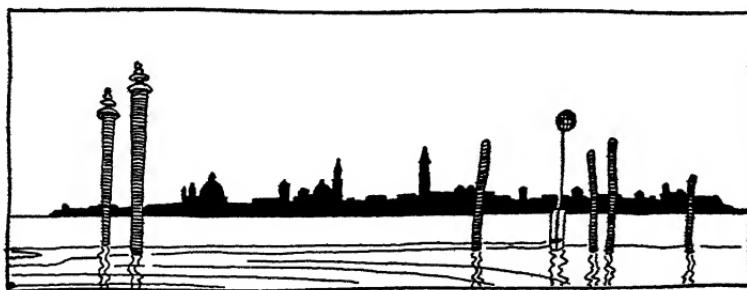
QUEEN OF THE ADRIATIC

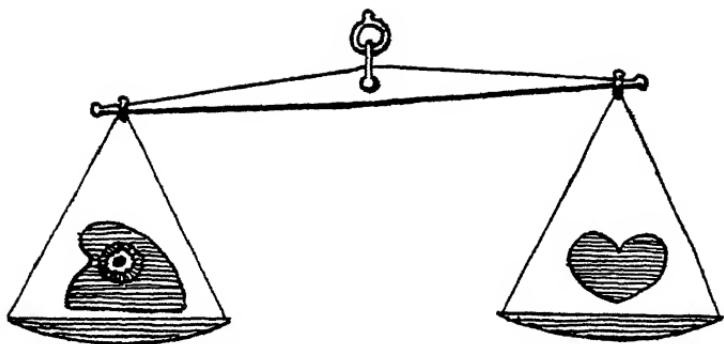
The rest of the adventure concerns the fugitives' arduous flight across fields from Treviso, their narrow escapes from capture, their suffering and final separation after getting beyond the jurisdiction of the powerful Venetian Doge. Casanova finally reaches Munich, where he has friends, who provide him with shelter, clothes, and money until the time when his incurable wanderlust starts him once more on the travels which end only at his death.

Casanova has been much maligned and little praised. He was by his own confession a libertine, but he was more than that, and after reading the full story (of which the foregoing is only an epitome) of his imprisonment and escape from the leads in Venice one cannot help being impressed by his resourcefulness, his courage, and his intellectual honesty.

As for "Fayre Venice, flower of the last world's delight," which is the burden of this chapter, no words can begin to do justice to this remarkable city. Turn, reader, to the symposium I have offered you, and read again the lines from *Childe Harold* beginning,

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
and know that even such exquisite word-patterns fail in
justice to the beauty of reality.





CHAPTER VII

South Sea Arcadia

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea.

TENNYSON

EVERY traveller to the South Seas who has a weakness for the written has tried to convey in print a picture of its Arcadian isles. Tusitala, Jack London, Somerset Maugham, Robert Keable, Calderon, Rupert Brooke—all have dipped their pens in panegyric honey, but none so successfully as Herman Melville. In his *Typee*, the story which I intend to epitomize here, is a complete picture of Marquesan life. After this book, written while he was still in his twenties, all other contemporary works on the Marquesas were redundant. This young American school-master-sailor had said all there was to be said about these islands, and anyone who possesses a copy of *Typee* has a *vade mecum* of every phase of Marquesan life before it was spoiled by Aryan adulterations. You see how the islanders lived before they learned the use of metal, what they ate and drank, how they dressed, slept, worked, fought, played, and made love. You are transported, by the author's magic, into the Marquesan forests, with such a feeling of reality that the whole thing must have happened to you in a former life. I am sure that I have been there in a previous incarnation. I have but to close my eyes, shutting out the vision

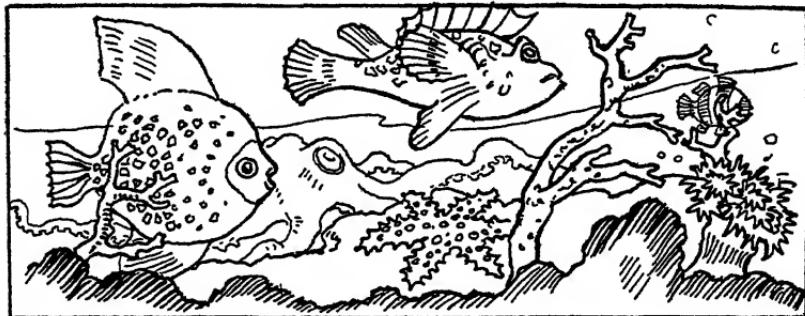
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of this four-square room in which I sit writing, and I can feel the ineffable solitude of the Marquesan valley, interrupted only by the cry of a bird or the crash and thud of some heavy fruit as it falls to earth through the tangle of leaves and branches. If I listen I may hear the low sighing of the sea or the distant murmur of a waterfall. I can smell the strong, sweet scent of the jungle, the curious smell of the tropics, which has something to do with heat, plant life, and over-ripe fruit. Through an irregular palisade of slender palm-trunks I can see the ocean, startlingly blue, and a broad, flat beach of sun-bleached sand, upon which is drawn a long, narrow native canoe decorated with pieces of pearl-shell. There is not a living thing to be seen, not even a bird, and I am made to feel conscious of the ocean, something of its immensity and of the terrible smallness of the island, a mere dot in an eternity of water. For millions of years the sea has ebbed and flowed upon this white beach, and it goes on, heedless of the coming and going of men and ships, and political strife. The ocean is breaking gently in long, curling breakers on the beach, with the *swish, swish* sound that becomes a murmur when heard from a distance. In the sweeping fronds of the tall palms a faint breeze stirs like a deep sigh, and serves to accentuate the solitude. Leaving behind, like Friday, deep imprints in the white sand, violating its virgin surface, I walk down to the sea's edge, where a coral reef has formed a lagoon, whose water, in contrast with that of the ocean, is glassy smooth. Climbing over the sharp, rough coral hummocks, and shading my eyes from the glare of the sun, I look into the clear green depths, and see the marine life on the sea-bed so clearly that I have to stir the surface with my finger to assure myself that there is water there at all. Four or five fathoms below is a fantastic, nightmarish submarine world, inhabited by bright-hued fish, molluscs, and polyps of grotesque and unfamiliar shape—streaked, spotted, spined, toothed, whiskered, horned, and ghoul-eyed—a world that I would be

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reluctant to dive into. Baby octopuses, sea-urchins, pink starfish, and sea-anemones—beautiful, harmless things, of course, but some of their friends, those unnamed horned, spiky monstrosities, affect me queerly, and I am content to leave them and return to the beach.

The Marquesan landscape is not, however, a thick jungle and nothing else, as my picture may have suggested, but a



mountainous one, whose ranges are divided by lovely valleys, inhabited in old times by separate tribes, who carried on a desultory warfare against each other. For the Marquesan was, as well as being the tallest and handsomest of the Polynesian tribes, the most warlike, just as are the Zulus and Masai among the Ethiopians. Of their physical beauty hear what the American Captain David Porter had to say over a century ago:

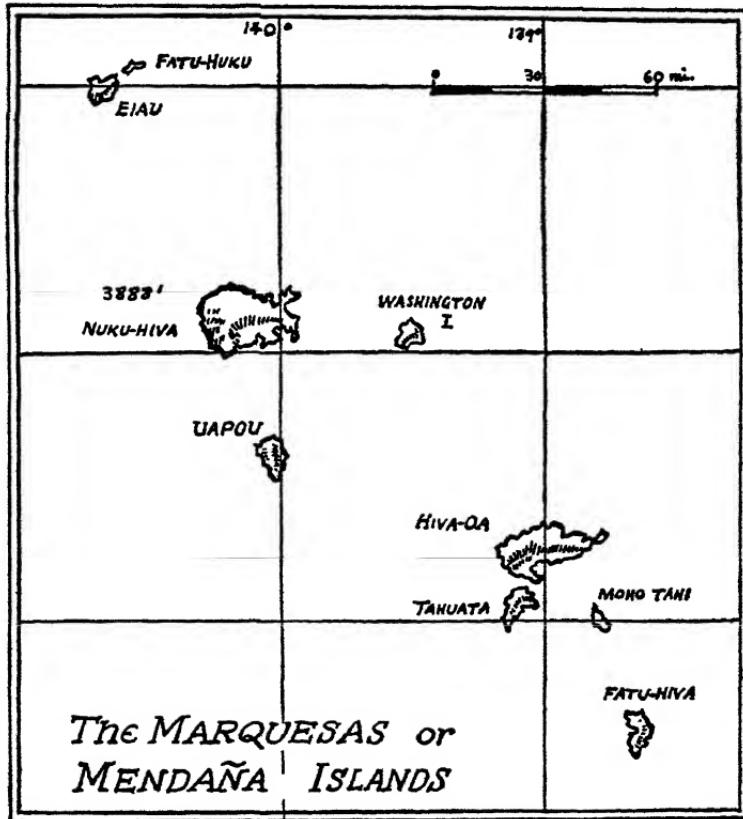
The men of the Marquesas are remarkably handsome, of large stature, and well proportioned; they possess every variety of countenance and feature, and a great difference is observable in the colour of the skin, which for the most part is of a copper colour. But some are as fair as the generality of working people much exposed to the sun of a warm climate.

The young girls are handsome and well formed; their skins are remarkably soft and smooth and their complexions no darker than many brunettes in America, celebrated for their beauty. Their modesty was more evident than that of the women of any place we had visited since leaving our own country; and if they suffered

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themselves (though with apparent timidity and reluctance) to be presented naked to strangers, may it not be in compliance with a custom which taught them to sacrifice to hospitality all that is most estimable?

R.L.S. wrote, "The Marquesan stands apart, annoying



and attractive, wild, shy, and refined," and described them as fiercely proud and modest. They maintained a dignity and reserve in the face of degenerating foreign influence and the usurpation of their islands longer than all other branches of the Polynesian race. In this one sees an analogy to the case of the American Indian. They were more savage than the Tahitians, and perhaps the last of the Polynesian people

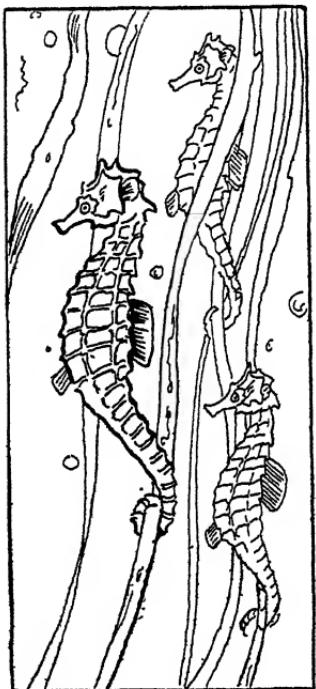
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to abandon cannibalism.¹ But they are pathetically susceptible to white men's maladies, and through smallpox, pneumonia, and tuberculosis died off like flies, leaving their once happy valleys uninhabited solitudes. The few natives left have settled on the coast, neither white nor brown, imitating Western ways and forgetting the arts of their forefathers. But their valleys remain pretty much as they have always been since the beginning of the world, for there are no coal-, gold-, or iron-mines to tear up the ground and make hideous scars on the landscape, and no manufacturing plants to poison the air with grime and smoke. The language, of course, is slowly becoming a hybrid affair, but much of its ancient poetry remains. Look at these names chosen at random: Han'aupe (the Vale of Doves), Hana-vave (Virgin's Bay), Hana-'Ei (Whale's Tooth Bay), Puamau (the Vale of Fadeless Flowers), Puaina-Atua (Spirit's Ear—the name for a certain tree fungus).

The ugly *bêche-de-mer* English, the *lingua franca* of the Pacific, is here, as in all Oceania, the common medium of speech between white and brown. Many of their own musical words have been ousted by the crazy pidgin English of *bêche-de-mer*. *Kanaka* ('man') and *vahine* ('woman') are 'fella' and 'Mary'; a paddle or an oar is a 'washee,' a box a 'bokkis'; to speak or to talk is 'to sing out'; to take is 'to catchem'—but this is enough.

In the month of January 1841 a young man named Herman Melville, then twenty-two years old, signed on for

¹ I believe the last recorded instance occurred in 1865.



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a whaling cruise in the American whaler *Acushnet*, bound for the South Seas. Though a school-teacher, and possessing the sensitive nature of an artist, an incurable wanderlust had driven him, in the depth of winter, to seek an adventure that was, five years later, to result in the publication of *Typee*, an acknowledged masterpiece in South Sea literature.

But the *Acushnet*¹ proved, as was so often the case, a veritable floating hell, and by the time the ship had come among the isles of Polynesia Melville had made up his mind to desert at the first opportunity. True, he had signed the ship's articles, legally pledging himself for the duration of the voyage, but, as the brutal and dishonest captain had failed to keep his part of the contract, the young sailor felt no longer morally bound to his word to serve until the end of the cruise. Reasoning thus, he deserts the ship while she is at anchor in the bay of Nukahiva. It was an idyllic spot to desert to.

The bay of Nukuheva, in which we were then lying, is an expanse of water not unlike in figure the space included within the limits of a horseshoe. It is, perhaps, nine miles in circumference. You approach it from the sea by a narrow entrance, flanked on either side by two small twin islets which soar conically to the height of some five hundred feet. From these the shore recedes on both hands, and describes a deep semicircle. From the verge of the water the land rises uniformly on all sides, with green and sloping acclivities, until from gently rolling hillsides and moderate elevations it insensibly swells into lofty and majestic heights, whose blue outlines, ranged all around, close in the view. The beautiful aspect of the shore is heightened by deep and romantic glens, which come down to it at almost equal distances, all apparently



HERMAN MELVILLE

¹ Named the *Dolly* in the book.

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radiating from a common centre, and the upper extremities of which are lost to the eye beneath the shadow of the mountains. Down each of these little valleys flows a clear stream, here and there assuming the form of a slender cascade, then stealing invisibly along until it bursts upon the sight again in larger and more noisy waterfalls, and at last demurely wanders along to the sea.

This is the land he saw from the sordid decks of the whaler, and the contemplation of it could not fail to hasten his decision to escape to its delectable shores at the first opportunity.

Nothing can exceed the imposing scenery of this bay. . . . Very often, when lost in admiration at its beauty, I have experienced a pang of regret that a scene so enchanting should be hidden from the world in these remote seas.

But the lovely valleys are inhabited by warlike native tribes, men of handsome features and superior physiques (their average height is six feet), but, at that day, unregenerate eaters of human flesh, and by no means to be trusted by a lone wandering white man. And had the young sailor's desire to escape the unspeakable sordidness of life aboard been anything less than desperate he would have hesitated long before deciding to trust his safety to such deceptive shores. For these lovely valleys hid death to the unlicensed wanderer.

Immediately adjacent to Nukuheva, and separated from it by the mountains seen from the harbour, lies the lovely valley of Happar,¹ whose inmates cherish the most friendly relations with the inhabitants of Nukuheva. On the other side of Happar, and closely adjoining it, is the magnificent valley of the dreaded Typees, the unappeasable enemy of both these tribes.

The word Typee means a lover of human flesh, and this title has not for nothing been given to one particular tribe, when, in truth, all the Marquesans were what we so beautifully call cannibals. But the Typees had, by their reputed ferocity, endowed the name, when applied to themselves,

¹ Melville's spelling of native names is often more phonetic than correct, according to the arbiters of these matters.

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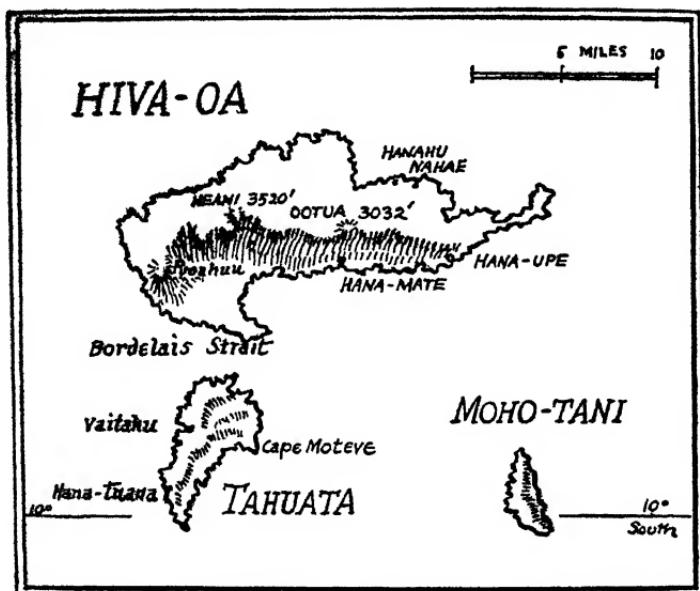
with a special and sinister significance. Their reputation for prowess and cruelty was known all over Polynesia, and was in direct contrast to that of the happy, friendly natives of Tahiti, to the south. Even to this day the Marquesans remain physically a superior race, despite the adulteration with often degenerate white blood. Melville states that the Typees enjoy a prodigious notoriety all over the islands, and goes on to tell how the Nukahiva people related tales of the terrible ferocity and prowess of their enemies the Typees, though he himself, knowing the native weakness for over-emphasis, was inclined to accept the stories of Typee cruelties as greatly exaggerated. Otherwise he would never have contemplated gambling his safety among such people. The Typees, for their part, had every reason to hate the white race, for many years before a detachment of marines from the Yankee frigate *Essex* had landed and devastated the valley, and killed many of their people in an unprovoked attack. And the native never forgets.

When the white man first came to the South Seas he was received with guileless hospitality, with open arms, but when trust was repaid by robbery, rape, and murder the native feeling changed to one of implacable bitterness. Whatever treachery and murder the native was guilty of it could be almost without exception traced to the motive of revenge, provoked by some previous wrong done by his white victim to himself or his people. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. That seemed the only way to even up matters, as the white offender was not punished by his own people. And if the superior white race could land on his islands and break all of the ten commandments with impunity should not the poor savage be permitted his sins, especially seeing that he had inherited code of values totally different from the white man's?

This, then, was the state of affairs when the young Melville, leaning over the rail, gazed upon the wooded valley to which he proposed to escape before the ship again put to

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sea. He knew, however, that the upper parts of the mountains which separate the tribal valleys were uninhabited, and that on the higher ground a fugitive might remain unmolested indefinitely, assuming that he could find sufficient natural food to support life. He knew that many natives had never stirred from their valleys during the whole of



their lives, and knew nothing of the appearance of their island, or of the world beyond the comparatively narrow confines of the glen in which they lived. As an example of this, there was the valley of Tior, between a quarter-mile and a half-mile wide and four miles long. One end was accessible by a narrow defile and the other open to the sea, but the sides were hemmed in by towering, vine-covered cliffs, fifteen hundred feet high.

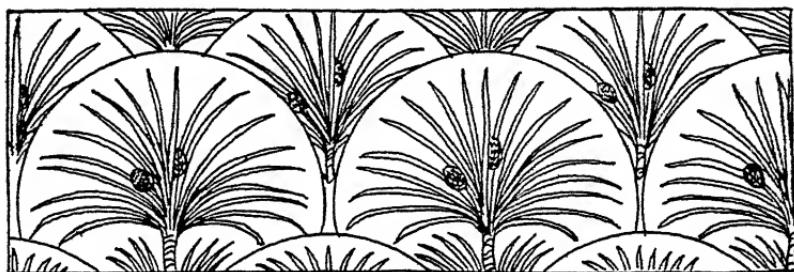
Melville speaks of his plan of avoiding contact with the natives in the valleys:

Having ascertained the fact before alluded to, that the islanders, from motives of precaution, dwelt together in the depths of the

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valley, and avoided wandering about in the more elevated portions of the shore, unless bound on some expedition of war or plunder, I concluded that if I could effect, unperceived, a passage to the mountains I might easily remain among them, supporting myself by such fruits as came my way until the sailing of the ship, an event of which I could not fail to be immediately apprised, as from my lofty position I should command a view of the entire harbour.

He had decided not to communicate his plans to escape to any of his shipmates, but it so happened that in a young



PANDANUS FURCATUS

sailor named Toby he found a companion of like sentiments to his own, and whom he ventured to take into his confidence. This Toby, who, like Melville, had obviously moved in different society from that which he was now in, but who seemed for some reason anxious to conceal the fact, at once fell in with Melville's invitation that he should escape with him. The next morning the starboard watch was given shore liberty, and, though he was aware that ordinarily on such an occasion his men would have taken the opportunity to desert, the captain had no such fears here. The reputation of the Typees would ensure their obedient return to the ship. However, to make sure, he gave them a final harangue on the peril they ran if they strayed into the woods from the beach.

The men went ashore in a tropical downpour, and at once took shelter in a native canoe-house, where most of them sat talking, and later went to sleep, as the rain continued to

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fall. This was the fugitives' opportunity, and, ignoring the weeping skies and the dripping jungle, they left the dry shelter and plunged into a grove of trees behind. The shower in a sense was a blessing, for it aided their escape by driving the natives indoors, where they would be less likely to catch sight of the two sailors, who, at the beginning of their flight, had to pass by a number of native huts. After pressing forward for some time through the saturated under-growth and getting completely saturated themselves they



began to climb a mountain, at whose summit they expected to be safe from the attentions of both the natives and the ship's officers.

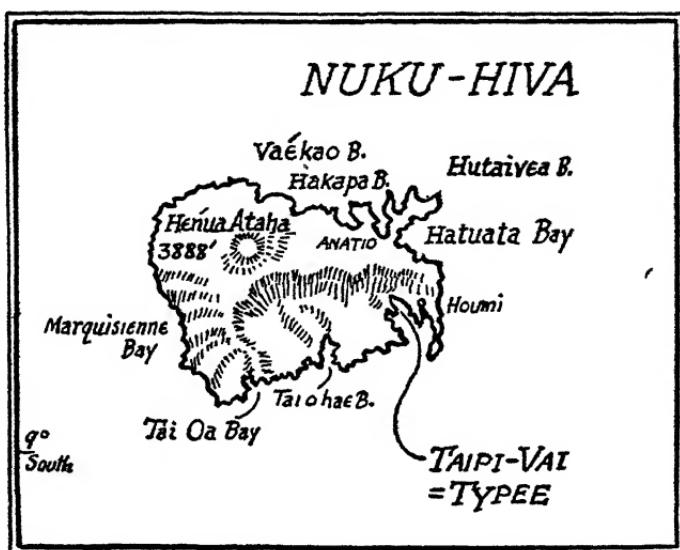
The beach was quitted early in the morning, and after climbing and fighting their way through canes and tangled undergrowth the pair found themselves late in the afternoon on what appeared to be the highest summit on the island, with a view that in more propitious circumstances would have been better appreciated. But a disappointment was in store. From the summit they discovered that the declivity into the next valley was

covered with the brightest verdure, and waving here and there with the foliage of clumps of woodland; among which, however, we perceived none of those trees upon whose fruits we had relied with such certainty. This was a most unlooked-for discovery, and one that promised to defeat our plans altogether, for we could not think of descending the mountain on the Nukuheva side in quest of food.

Inside his 'frock'—*i.e.*, blouse—Melville had concealed a few yards of cheap calico, some tobacco, and a couple of handfuls ofhardtack, and now he ruefully regretted not having brought more. Toby had brought a similar collection inside his frock, and which, like his companion's, was

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now moulded together by rain and sweat into a villainous-looking mess. He had, besides, a small bag containing needles, thread, and a razor, and these comprised their joint possessions. Lack of adequate clothing and shelter concerned them not at all, but the meagreness of the food-supply was a source of serious anxiety. Nevertheless they agreed not



to descend to the bay until the ship had departed, an event that would not occur for another ten days. Sitting on the mountain-top, wet, hungry, and exhausted, they divided the soggy mixture of ships' biscuits and tobacco into six equal parts, each of which should be a day's ration for both.

The first night away from the ship was spent in a crude shelter of sticks on the side of a deep ravine. Melville describes the place:

Five foaming streams, rushing through as many gorges, and swelled and turbid by the recent rains, united together in one mad plunge of nearly eighty feet, and fell with uproar into a deep black pool scooped out of the gloomy-looking rocks that lay piled around, and thence in one collected body dashed down a narrow sloping

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channel which seemed to penetrate into the very bowels of the earth. Overhead vast roots of the trees hung down from the sides of the ravine, dripping with moisture, and trembling with the concussions produced by the fall. It was now sunset, and the feeble, uncertain light that found its way into these caverns and woody depths heightened their strange appearance, and reminded us that in a short time we should find ourselves in utter darkness.

Throughout a perfectly hellish night of cramp and cold the rain penetrated the scant shelter, and at dawn they were

up chafing their moribund limbs and preparing to climb out of this hated place, where they had scarcely slept for acute discomfort, the pouring wet, and the thunder of the waterfall. The rainy season had not been the best time for such an exploit, but in this the run-

aways had had no choice. Here the author facetiously recommends adventurous youths escaping from ships in romantic islands to provide themselves with umbrellas.

During the second day, while searching for a more attractive hiding-place and shelter from the rain, they stumbled into sight of a piece of scenery typical of the Marquesas, and looked down

into the bosom of a valley, which swept away in long undulations to the blue waters in the distance. Midway towards the sea, and peering here and there amidst the foliage, could be seen the palmetto-thatched houses of its inhabitants glistening in the sun that had bleached them to dazzling whiteness. The vale was more than three leagues in length, and about a mile across at its greatest width.

On either side it appeared hemmed in by steep and green acclivities, which, uniting near the spot where I lay, formed an abrupt and semicircular termination of grassy cliffs and precipices,



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hundreds of feet in height, over which flowed numberless small cascades. . . . Over all the landscape there reigned the most hushed repose, which I almost feared to break, lest, like the enchanted garden in the fairy-tale, a single syllable might dissolve the spell.

Was this valley Typee or Happar? On the correct answer to that question hung their very lives, it would seem. But who was to answer it? The moment was an anxious one. Toby thought it was Happar; Melville insisted that it was Typee; but neither had any proof. The former tribe was at peace with the Nukahiva people, a fact that would ensure the safety and even a friendly reception of the two fugitives. But Melville strongly opposed the risky experiment of descending the valley to find out, and Toby eventually agreed to the suggestion to march across to a distant valley, which his companion believed was uninhabited. Owing to attacks of fever and a state of extreme fatigue the journey became a *via dolorosa*, every foot of the way being accomplished with painful slowness, punctuated by moments of semi-delirium on the part of Melville, who only continued through the persuasions of his companion. They did not find the fruitful valley.

Together we stood, towards the close of this weary day, in the cavity of the third gorge we had entered, wholly incapacitated for any further exertion, until restored to some degree of strength by food and repose.

It would be inimical to my purpose to dwell further upon the sufferings of these two young men, after I have gone to so much trouble to extol the physical attractions of the Marquesas. But Eden itself could hardly have been delightful during the rains. Even Eden is not proof against weeping skies. So let us, lest we lose confidence, hasten forward, as it were, into the sunlight.

On the third morning of their flight, in desperation, they decided to descend into the valley where the huts were seen, and chance their fate. The two exposed and practically foodless days on the mountain-tops, coupled with fevers and

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exhaustion, had reduced their resistance to such a degree that a few more days of such exposure might easily be fatal. Nature was an enemy more to be dreaded than their fellow-men. On the fifth day they arrived in the unknown valley after a perilous descent down cliff-faces, and nearly losing their lives in the process. From the sea or on the foreshore itself the loftiness of the cliffs in these mountains is deceptive, their height being much greater than it seems.

Once in the valley the first thought of the two sailors was how to obtain the fruit they had come through such perils for. They cautiously advanced through all but impenetrable thickets, still uncertain as to the sort of reception they would receive. Coming in time to a path, they followed it and came upon some trees bearing fruit, which they attacked like the famished animals they were. After eating what fruit could be found they pushed on down the valley, keeping always a sharp look-out for any signs of natives.

At last we resolved to enter a grove near at hand, and had advanced a few rods, when, just upon its skirts, I picked up a slender breadfruit shoot, perfectly green, and with the tender bark freshly stript from it. It was still slippery with moisture, and appeared as if it had but that moment been thrown aside. I said nothing, but merely held it up to Toby, who started at this undeniable evidence of the vicinity of the savages. The plot was now thickening. A short distance farther lay a little faggot of the same shoots bound together with a strip of bark. Could it have been thrown down by some solitary native, who, alarmed at seeing us, had hurried forward to carry the tidings of our approach to his countrymen?—Typee or Happa?

A few moments later they come face to face with two natives, a boy and a girl, standing perfectly motionless watching them. The pair, entirely naked, save for a leaf, and as graceful as young deer, were timid, but, after being offered gifts of cloth, consented to lead the white sailors to shelter, as it had begun to rain. The boy's arm, half hidden under the long, wild tresses of the girl, embraced her

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shoulders, while he held both of her hands in his. The two men followed the children, uncertain whether they were walking straight into the cooking-pot, as it were.

They are led into the village, and are instantly surrounded by excited, chattering natives. One, a noble-looking fellow, and evidently the chief, fixes an unwinking gaze on Melville, looking at him with a severe expression and without turning his gaze away for an instant. Growing nervous under this scrutiny, Melville offers the chief some of the tobacco that he has brought with him, but the other turns it aside without speaking a word.

Was this act of the chief a token of enmity? Typee or Happar? I asked within myself. I started, for at the same moment this identical question was asked by the strange being before me. I turned to Toby; the flickering light of a native taper showed me his countenance pale with trepidation at this fatal question. I paused for a second, and I knew not by what impulse it was that I answered, "Typee." The piece of dusky statuary nodded in approval, and then murmured, "Motarkee!"¹ "Motarkee," said I, without further hesitation. "Typee motarkee."

What a transition! The dark figures around us leaped to their feet, clapped hands in transport, and shouted again and again the talismanic syllables, the utterance which appeared to have settled everything.

By the slender thread of chance the neutral Melville had hit upon the right word and the approval and friendship of the fierce islanders. This, of course, called for a reception, and every one was introduced to the strange white visitors, the young females of the tribe being particularly embarrassing in their curiosity about the white man's person. The next morning the house where they were lodged was visited early by a number of young women wreathed with flowers. They had, indeed, wakened the two sleepers, and then

seated themselves round us on the mats, and gave full play to that prying inquisitiveness which time out of mind has been attributed

¹ Good.

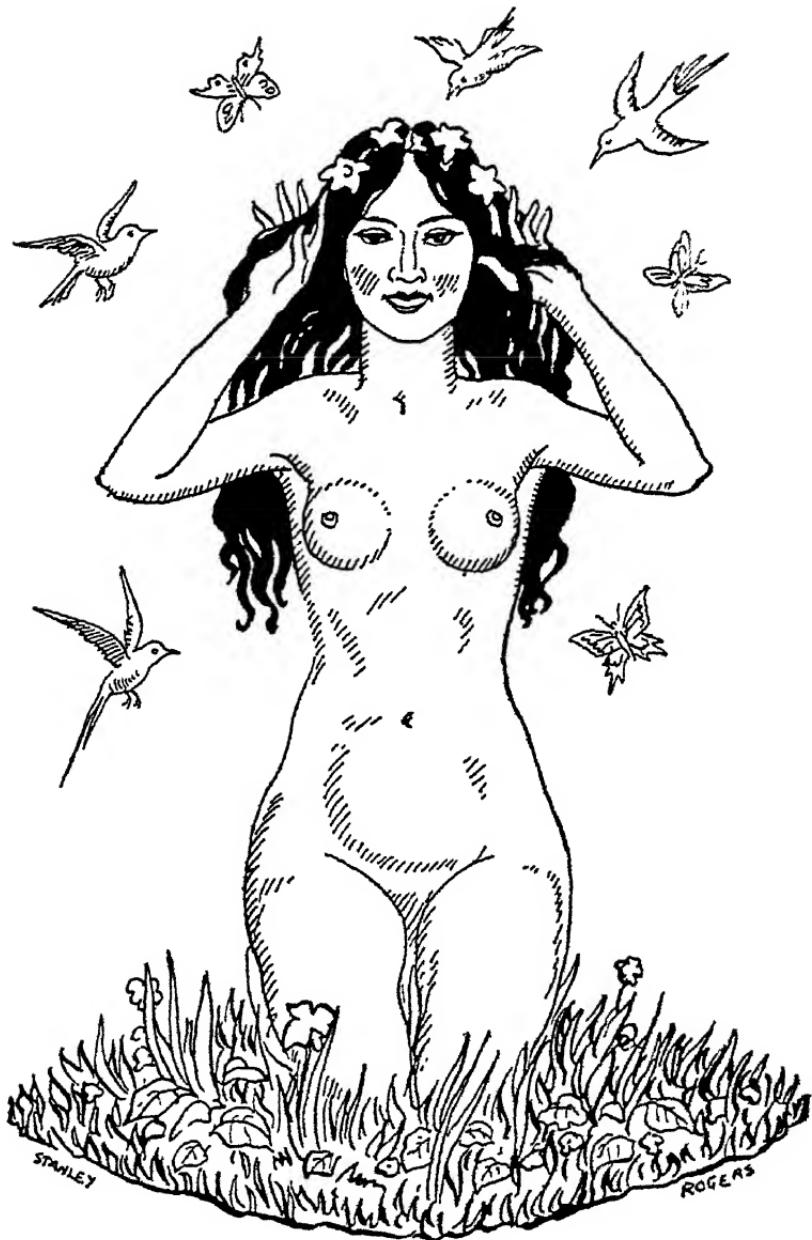
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to the adorable sex. As these unsophisticated young creatures were attended by no jealous duennas, their proceedings were altogether informal, and void of artificial restraint. Long and minute was the investigation with which they honoured us, and so uproarious their mirth, that I felt infinitely sheepish; and Toby was immeasurably outraged at their familiarity.

These lively young ladies were at the same time wonderfully polite and humane; fanning aside the insects that occasionally lighted on our brows; presenting us with food; and compassionately regarding me in the midst of my afflictions. But in spite of all their blandishments, my feelings of propriety were exceedingly shocked, for I could not but consider them as having overstepped the due limits of female decorum.

Typee is really a detailed picture of Marquesan life, microscopically reported by a born observer with an unusually retentive memory. Through nearly four hundred closely printed pages we follow the narrative of their four months' detention among the Typees. Though the natives treated them indulgently, like children, and ministered to Melville's severely damaged knee, due to a fall, they were kept under strict watch and were virtually prisoners. At first this did not trouble the two runaways overmuch. It was pleasant to receive so much flattering attention and an abundance of food and rest. The crippled Melville was given a personal servant, a grotesquely decorated young giant named Kory-Kory, who carried the white man on his back whenever he wished to go abroad. Melville became very attached to Kory-Kory, a sentiment that was cordially reciprocated. And here enters the feminine element, at once the sugar and spice of so many narratives, but in the present instance at least without its concomitant passions and jealousies.

Her free, pliant figure was the very perfection of female grace and beauty. Her complexion was a rich and mantling olive, and when watching the glow upon her cheeks I could almost swear that beneath the transparent medium there lurked the blushes of faint vermillion. The face of this girl was a rounded oval, and each feature as perfectly formed as the heart or imagination of man



Fayaway

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could desire. Her full lips, when parted with a smile, disclosed teeth of a dazzling whiteness; and when her rosy mouth opened with a burst of merriment they looked like the milk-white seeds of the "arta," a fruit of the valley, which, when cleft in twain, shows them reposing in rows on either side, embedded in rich juicy pulp. Her hair of the deepest brown, parted irregularly in the middle, flowed in natural ringlets over her shoulders, and when she chanced to stoop, fell over and hid her lovely bosom. Gazing into the depth of her strange blue eyes, when she was in a contemplative mood, they seemed most placid, yet unfathomable; but when illuminated by some lively emotion they beamed upon the beholder like stars. . . . I may succeed, perhaps, in particularizing some of the individual features of Fayaway's beauty, but the general loveliness of appearance which they all contributed to produce I will not attempt to describe. The easy unstudied graces of a child of nature like this, breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer, and nurtured by the simple fruits of the earth, enjoying a perfect freedom from care and anxiety, and removed effectually from all injurious tendencies, strike the eye in a manner which cannot be portrayed. . . . Though in my eyes, at least, Fayaway was indisputably the loveliest female I saw in Typee, yet the description I have given of her will in some measure apply to nearly all the youthful portion of her sex in the valley. Judge ye then, reader, what beautiful creatures they must have been.

With the strong Kory-Kory as valet and guide, and the lovely Fayaway as playmate, your average beachcomber would see no sense in the man who would wish to run away from such an Eden. Where every want was instantly gratified, where every one was happy and the worries of civilization non-existent, to reject such hospitality would savour of churlishness, but a gilded cage can never compensate for loss of liberty, and however much the white men grew to love their hosts, irreconcilable nostalgia must in the end triumph over gratitude and even love. But Melville, with a crippled knee, was, willy-nilly, kept by his own infirmity confined to the purlieus of the village. Toby, on the other hand, sound in limb and now rested, agreed to attempt to bring help

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to rescue Melville if he could get away on pretence of going to the coast to bring urgently needed lotions for his companion's injured knee. But the natives would not hear of such a proposal, and made it plain that they felt hurt that their company was so little appreciated. In the end they agreed to Toby's supposed errand of mercy, he to be escorted part way by one or two of the tribe, who would point out to



him the easiest route to the bay. A few hours later Toby is brought back by natives, who find him unconscious with a severe scalp wound. Recovering consciousness, he tells how he was attacked and clubbed by some Happar warriors, and escaped by running back into the Typee domain, whither they dared not follow. Toby is nursed back to life, and their bronzed friends take the attack of the hostile natives as the text of their repeated chant on the virtues of the Typees and the desirability of the white men's remaining among them for aye.

Then one morning there was tremendous excitement in the village—news had come that boats were approaching the bay at the seaward end of the valley, and preparations were made for a general exodus to receive them. Toby's application to accompany the party was granted, as, while Melville was forced to remain within the village with his crippled knee, they felt that he would not leave his friend.

But when the party returned at sunset Toby was not with

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them. He had been allowed to depart with the boats after promising to return within three days. The three days passed, and Toby did not come, nor after many days, until hope deserted the companion left behind, and he sank into the melancholy of despair, which, for a long time, even the sweet blandishments of Fayaway could not dispel. Kory-Kory and this maiden did their best to liven Melville's mood.

Frequently in the afternoon he would carry me to a particular part of the stream, where the beauty of the scene produced a soothing influence upon my mind. At this place the water flowed between grassy banks, planted with enormous trees, whose vast branches, interlacing overhead, formed a leafy canopy; near the stream were several smooth black rocks. . . . Here I often lay for hours, covered with a gauze-like veil of tappa, while Fayaway, seated beside me, and holding in her hand a fan woven from the leaflets of a young coconut bough, brushed aside the insects that occasionally lighted on my face, and Kory-Kory, with a view of chasing away my melancholy, performed a thousand antics in the water before us.

Gradually the kindness and solicitude of his Typee friends drove out the black megrims, and Melville began to take a renewed pleasure in the novelty of his situation. Every evening a number of comely girls would kneel round him and anoint the whole of his body with a fragrant oil, which they would apply with their soft brown palms—a delightfully soothing massage that compensated for much.

The Typees were anxious that Melville, or Tommo, as they called him, should submit to his face being tattooed, a prospect that filled him with horror. On the mahogany skin of a Marquesan the faint blue tracery of tattooing does not show up unpleasantly, but on a white skin the effect would be startling. Constantly he was urged to permit the operation—just a little pattern to start with—and had much ado to stave off the too insidious attentions of a native tattoo artist, who longed to transfer to his white skin a choice design, where it would show up well. He is almost forcibly

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constrained by three of these enthusiasts, and only rescued by Kory-Kory.

This incident opened my eyes to a new danger; and I now felt convinced that in some luckless hour I should be disfigured in such a manner, as never more to have the *face* to return to my countrymen, even should an opportunity offer.

Even the chief, Mehevi, signified that he would be better pleased to see Tommo thus decorated, and he could not comprehend the white man's abhorrence of such a practice—that is, when applied to the face.

Another disquieting custom of his hosts, and, indeed, of the whole Polynesian race, was the eating of human flesh. Considered biologically, there is no reason why this practice should be any worse than that of eating beef; yet custom among white races is so strongly against it that for them no horror can compare with that of cannibalism. And since to linger over this aspect of former-day Marquesan life would be to cast an indelible shadow over the sylvan paradise, I will content myself by the mere statement that the enforced guest discovered evidence of a cannibal feast after his hosts had done battle with their Happar neighbours. He was exceedingly shocked, and for a moment wondered if such a fate had come to the lost Toby. The discovery of human remains after a feast celebrating the defeat of the Happars happened towards the end of his captivity. Meanwhile he notes many things and events of the life around him.

As I extended my wanderings in the valley [his leg was somewhat better] and grew more familiar with the habits of its inmates, I was fain to confess that, despite his condition, the Polynesian savage, surrounded by all the luxurious provisions of nature, enjoyed a happier, though certainly less intellectual, existence than the self-complacent European. . . . The voluptuous Indian with every desire supplied, whom Providence has bountifully provided with all the sources of pure and natural enjoyment, and from whom are removed so many of the ills and pains of life—what has he to desire at the hands of Civilization?

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It is obvious that inculcating civilization has made the native discontented and then killed him with germs he had never learned to resist. It seems to me that he was never meant to be civilized, and that the tragic attempts to make him so on the part of missionaries and other well-meaning busybodies are nothing less than sheer impertinence. But in Melville's time the Marquesans were practically untouched by the heavy hand of civilization. "All was mirth, fun, and high good humour," and, for the white guest, dalliance with the beautiful Fayaway, whose company was becoming almost indispensable. They swam, and fished, and canoed together. Once while on the lake in their canoe Fayaway was struck with an idea. Discarding her *tapa* robe, she stood erect with her arms outstretched, spreading the robe for a sail. "We American sailors," remarks Melville, "pride ourselves upon our straight, clean spars, but a prettier mast than Fayaway made was never shipped aboard any craft."

One day there arrived in the valley a stranger, a *kanaka* named Marnoo, a beautifully made man about twenty-five years old—a "Polynesian Apollo." He was received with extravagant gestures of pleasure by the Typees, and treated with the consideration due to an important personage. At first he paid not the slightest heed to Melville, but after the sort of reception was over he came and spoke softly, in English, to the white man, asking him how he liked the country and how long he had been in the valley. He explained that he had come from Nukahiva, and that, as he was taboo, he could go anywhere freely. This, it seemed, was a curious custom in the islands; certain natives were pronounced taboo, which was equivalent to a 'safe-conduct.' Melville endeavours to enlist Marnoo's interest on his behalf, in the cause of his liberty, but Marnoo insists that such a thing is quite impracticable, as the Typees would never release him. Yielding to Melville's entreaties, he does, however, appeal to the Typee chiefs on his behalf, but the

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request is received with such a passionate refusal that it is some days before he is able to win back their former goodwill. But at heart they are children, and the sternest among them find it impossible to keep up a mood that does violence to their very natures. Melville frequently refers to the happy character of the Marquesans, as though they had found the true philosopher's stone, particularly of the women. With the susceptible heart of a sailor, not to mention an artist, he finds the women "delightful" and "adorable"—adjectives frequently applied to them.

In the eighteen-forties the Marquesan had not learned the meaning of immorality, for the white man's false values, prudery, and making an unwholesome mystery over sex had not then begun to poison the simple minds of the people. Now, of course, the Marquesans hide their shameful bodies under vulgar cotton garments, and all is well. After dwelling at some length on the physical beauty of the islanders, every man of whom is a fit model for a Greek statue, Melville remarks:

When I remembered that these islanders derived no advantage from dress, but appeared in all the naked simplicity of nature, I could not avoid comparing them with the fine gentlemen and dandies who promenade such unexceptional figures in our frequented thoroughfares. Stripped of the cunning artifices of the tailor, and standing forth in the garb of Eden,—what a sorry set of round-shouldered, spindle-shanked, crane-necked varlets would civilized men appear.

The Marquesan women were even to Western standards undeniably attractive, and their bodies as daintily formed as those of their white sisters. There was nothing of the coarse anthropoid savage about them, and of that quality nowadays called 'it' these Marquesan females were possessed in abundance. The Marquesan woman was a creature to be loved and petted and admired—a contrast to the common lot of most savage races, whose women are regarded as child-making machines and beasts of burden, little else. Even the

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Mohammedan denies his women-folk a soul. But here, in Polynesia, woman, under the influence of respect and affection and a proper recognition of her value in the scheme of things, had evolved into what Melville called "an adorable creature." In the light of knowledge from other sources it is unlikely that the young sailor exaggerated the charms of Fayaway. And here was a living woman of remarkable beauty to give the lie to those who assert that romantic writers, their eyes blinded by the glamour of hearsay, make roses out of dandelions and see beauty in a native woman where none exists. Now, though I have not myself been to the Marquesas, I have seen a great many Polynesians, and I can aver that their hair is wavy and not straight, and often a dark brown, and their features of far finer mould than those of half the dwellers in modern cities. Nowadays, especially in Hawaii, the *kanaka* is apt to grow fat and degenerate, but farther south, where the infiltration of Western customs and ideals has been slower, the native still preserves much of his ancient nobility. This is, of course, more apparent on the more isolated atolls than in such famed beauty spots as Fatuhiva. In the eighties Robert Louis Stevenson, in the yacht *Casco*, called there, and afterwards wrote delightfully about the country. Later came Jack London and others of the writing fraternity.

Melville had been three months with the Typees, and each day found his captivity more irksome, though the behaviour of his hosts was never more friendly. Even the lovely and devoted Fayaway had no power to divert his melancholy reflections. Prevented by lack of sufficient knowledge of the language from conversing in anything but monosyllables with his fellow-creatures, Melville began to bear less easily the sense of isolation. But having seen the intensity of displeasure aroused by his request to be allowed to leave them, he craftily assumed a mask of cheerfulness, knowing that any appearance of discontent would seriously prejudice his chances of ultimate escape. About this time

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the painful knee trouble began again to show itself, making it almost impossible for Melville to walk without assistance. This added misfortune indicated that without proper medical attention the leg never would be cured, and the sufferer's anxiety to escape became a consuming passion.

About two weeks later Marnoo, the taboo *kanaka*, again visited the Typees. They had recovered from their displeasure of his taking the part of Melville on his last visit, and he was received with exclamations of the liveliest joy. During this second visit, which was brief, he spoke a few passionate words to Melville in clipped English, plainly showing that he was not disposed to risk his own safety to assist the white man's escape, but if he could successfully run away one night while the Typees were sleeping, and reach his own native valley, Pueearka, that he, Marnoo, would conduct him to the coast, where he could find a ship. And then, as though fearful of having said so much in the presence of the naturally suspicious Typees, he impatiently turned his back on Melville and conversed in a lively manner with his own countrymen. When he departs Melville carefully notes the direction he takes through the forest. The method of escape had been suggested, but how was it to be accomplished, surrounded as he was by his attentive and watchful friends, who never left him day or night? In spite of this and the handicap of a crippled knee he determined to make the attempt. He forthwith tests the possibility of getting out of the hut without awakening his companions, but after several attempts abandons the scheme, as invariably one or the other would start up demanding to know where he was going. He would reply "Water," and suspicion would be lulled, but thereafter beside his couch every evening Kory-Kory would place a calabash of water.

Three weeks after Marnoo's second visit, and about four months since Melville and Toby have entered the valley of the Typees, the village is electrified by the news that Toby is coming—is in a boat that has entered the bay. Melville,

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hopping about on his sound leg, begs Mehevi, the chief, to allow him to go down to meet his long-lost companion, and is permitted to go, carried on the backs of natives, who accompany him to the number of half a hundred. Thus they proceed, a chattering, eager cavalcade, for four or five miles through the jungle, until they are met by a party of twenty natives, who inform the larger group that the rumour is false, that Toby has not arrived. This, at least, is what they inform the disappointed Melville. But he is suspicious, especially when a number of his companions continue the march to the sea. After repeated requests to be carried and being fiercely refused he grasps a spear, and begins to hobble alone along the trail leading towards the bay. Before he has advanced thus a hundred yards he is surrounded by vociferous, gesticulating warriors. At that moment he finds a friend in Marheyo, the father of Kory-Kory, a vigorous old man, who gazes with compassion on the white man and mutters the only two words of English that he knows, the words 'home' and 'mother,' words Melville has taught him.

I at once understood what he meant, and eagerly expressed my thanks to him. Fayaway and Kory-Kory were by his side weeping violently; and it was not until the old man had twice repeated the command that his son could bring himself to obey him, and take me again upon his back.

Some opposed this action, but Kory-Kory was allowed to proceed with his burden unmolested. When Melville first heard the boom of the surf his joy was indescribable. The sea he had gladly quitted a few months before now stirred him to ecstasies of delight.

When the procession came into the open facing the sea the first thing they saw was a British whale-boat, lying a few fathoms off the beach and manned by five *kanakas* in cotton tunics. At the water's edge a large crowd of natives had collected, and from their midst Melville hears his own name shouted. Among them he sees the tall figure of a

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Hawaiian, one Karakoe, who had often come aboard his ship when she lay at Nukahiva. He remembers now that Karakoe is another of those natives protected by taboo. He stands near the water's edge holding a thick roll of cotton cloth, two or three bags of powder, and a musket, which he is offering to the chiefs around him. They reject the offer in anger and order him to depart. He is plainly endeavouring to purchase the captive's freedom, and is not intimidated by the rebuffs. The situation is tense; Melville advances towards the tabooed *kanaka* until forcibly restrained by his own bodyguard, and Karakoe calls out that he is threatened with death if he moves towards him. Meanwhile the shouting and excitement among the natives is increasing. Still the *kanaka* holds his ground, refusing to be ordered back into the boat, and pointing out the virtues of the musket he holds in his hand. Driven to the recklessness of despair by the chiefs' repeated refusals to release him, Melville tears himself from the grip of his guards and rushes over to Karakoe, who is instantly surrounded by the angry chiefs, who force him into the sea. Seeing the attempt useless, and his own life in imminent peril, he signals to the boat to pull in and take him on board. There are, however, a few who sympathize with the captive, and the excited natives now take sides, and a fight begins among them. This diverts the attention of his captors, and, except for Marheyo, Kory-Kory, and the devoted girl Fayaway, Melville is alone. This is his opportunity: it is now or never. He looks beseechingly at the old man and moves towards the sea. Neither he nor his son attempts to prevent him, and Melville quickly joins the *kanaka*, who has been watching the little drama. The rowers pull in as near as they dare, Melville embraces Fayaway, who cannot speak for the violence of her grief, and an instant later is in the boat as the rowers bend to the oars with all the strength of their muscular arms and backs. Marheyo and Kory-Kory with a number of the women, who had a weak spot in their hearts for Tommo,

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follow him into the sea—but not Fayaway, who has sunk down on to the sand literally bowed with grief. Melville takes the musket from Karakoe and hands it to Marheyo, and indicates that he is to give Fayaway the roll of calico, and gives the powder bags to the females who are crowding round.

When the boat is fifty yards from the shore the quarrelling natives, noticing its departure, rush down to the sea and hurl their javelins at it. In a freshening wind the boat is pulled away from the land, but not before a number of infuriated Typees have swum out in an attempt to overtake it.

The circumstances leading to Melville's release may be quickly revealed. The captain of an Australian ship, being short of men, put into Nukahiva to recruit his company, when a native (Karakoe) informs him that an American sailor is detained by the Typees, and he offers to attempt to purchase his release if supplied with suitable trade goods. Karakoe had been told of Melville's plight by Marnoo, who had thus contributed towards his release.

The mystery of Toby was cleared up after the author had returned to America. He had been taken on board a ship by a captain who had solemnly promised to send tabooed natives for his companion left behind with the Typees. The captain, however, failed to keep his word, and, ignoring Toby's ravings at such treachery, ordered the anchors to be weighed. The erstwhile companions met four years later in New York, when Toby had the opportunity not only of disproving rumours that he had been killed by natives, but of clearing himself of any suspicion of having deserted his friend.

A few remarks on the Marquesas:

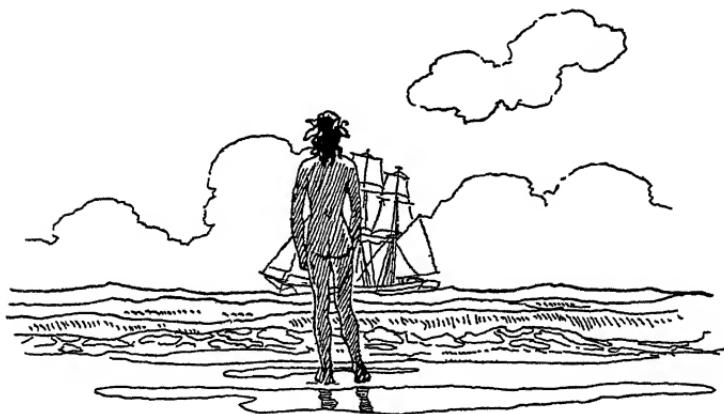
Discovered in 1595 by Alvaro Mendaña, a Spanish navigator, they have been since 1842 under French dominion, and consist of about a dozen volcanic islands lying 900 miles

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north of Tahiti, just under the equator, but, owing to the cleansing winds from the sea, have a climate not inimical to white men. Nukahiva (the scene of Melville's four months' indulgent captivity) is seventy miles in circumference, and belongs to the north-western group—seven isles. It was in 1842, the year Melville was there, that Rear-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars took formal possession of the islands in the name of France, after the way had been prepared by French Catholic missionaries.

Of flora there is a surfeit, of fauna a paucity—as in most of the Polynesian isles. Except for dogs, rats, and pigs, there are few mammals, and few insects.

The rainy season begins at the end of November and continues for half a year, during which time the temperature is consistently high.





CHAPTER VIII

The Isle of Grottoes

Un pezzo del cielo caduto in terra.

AFTER reading Dr Axel Munthe's *Story of San Michele* life seemed no longer worth while unless one had seen Capri. Not that the kindly doctor advised his readers to go there; he would indeed be more likely to deprecate any such suggestion, for, however much he may love his fellow-men, it would be scarcely human to wish to see them swarming over the olive- and pine-clad hills like a plague of locusts. As it is, they come in disconcerting numbers, attracted by the extraordinary beauty of the scenery and the renown of the Blue Grotto, and some with hopes of glimpsing the sirens who are said to have lived there.

Capri sits in the sea like a crouching lion across the south entrance to the Bay of Naples, about nineteen miles from the Vesuvian city, or, as Jean Paul saw it, like a sphinx. But the German Ferdinand Gregorovius, also given to imagery, likened the island to a sarcophagus whose sides were adorned with snaky-haired furies. The silhouette of Capri has been compared to many curious things—a crocodile, a dog, a *caliga*, or boot. The Germans, not to be outdone, called it Eber Insel, or Boar Island, which may, however, have nothing to do with its silhouette, for the Greek word *kapros*

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means 'boar,' and it is not a far cry from *kapros* to Capri. The Greeks were there long before the Romans, and Greek antiquities have been frequently found while digging on the land. Anacapri, the present name for the higher part of the island, is a Greek word, and Strabo, in Roman times, gives it this name. *Capraim* was a Phœnician word meaning 'two towns,' a significant clue to the origin of the present name, for Capri is still governed by two towns, Anacapri and Capri. The lower town, Capri, lies half a mile from the sea, on rising ground between the hills of San Michele and Castello. It is a town of narrow streets, white houses with flat roofs, and tourist hotels. There are enough of these caravanserais to cope with the annual flood of visitors from all over Europe, 90 per cent. of whom, however, are day trippers, and return on the afternoon boat to Naples. Contrast these hurrying thousands with conditions a hundred years ago, before the Blue Grotto had attracted attention to the island. An English gentlewoman, writing of Capri in 1825, says: "The best way to accomplish the trip is to take a boat with ten rowers and a cold dinner, including bread, salad, fruit, plates, glasses, forks, knives, etc., but no wine." Milady evidently felt it wise not to depend too much on the uncertain provender of the island's *locandas*.

The natural physical division of the island into two parts by vast vertical ramparts is one of its most curious features. The upper part, a high plateau, is occupied by the Anacapriotes, or highlanders, and the lower part by the Capriotes, or lowlanders, who for centuries were constantly at war. According to Dr Munthe (1929), ancient jealousies still smoulder between the people of the coast and the people of the plateau. The Anacapriotes complained to Charles V that the lowlanders burned their crops and their boats and prevented them from fishing. It is only in comparatively modern times that the ancient vendetta has died out. The completion of the carriage road in 1874 did much to wipe away old animosities. It marked the beginning of a new

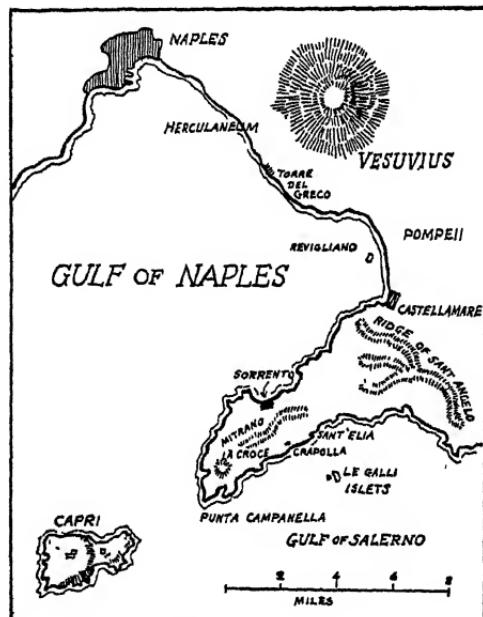
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era, for, like the Venetians, many of the islanders had never seen a horse, though the nearest point of the mainland was only three miles distant.

In appearance the Anacapriote is almost pure Greek, not the bastard Levantine Greek of to-day, but the Greek of

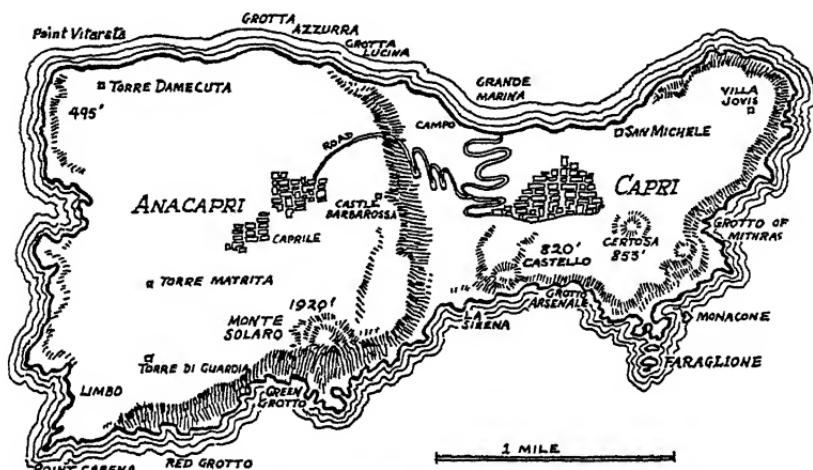
Heracles and Homer, fair hair and blue eyes dominant, and his speech of different blend to that of the Capriote. The latter is a mixture of Latin, Greek, Turk, Arab, Spaniard, Englishman and Frenchman, though his language, like that of the highlanders, is Italian. Both peoples are incurably superstitious, wearing amulets and charms against the evil eye and other

dangers. The peasants, the *contadini*, despite their growing sophistication, are happy, friendly people, though not above the Latin penchant for begging. But begging there is not an offensive business, and if the request for a gift is refused the Capriote bears you no ill-will, but smilingly accepts the refusal. They are so poor, and in some ways so ingenuous, that it seems to them natural to ask and for you to give—you who come in fine clothes and pay a man to carry your expensive-looking portmanteaux. They have a flowery form of begging that is charming. They will give you a flower, a sprig of blossom, and will not refuse your gift of money in return, for the simple reason that they expect it. It is said that the ambition of every Capriote woman is to



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own a pair of shoes, get a dowry, and marry a rich milord. Certainly many of the females are remarkably beautiful, and some have married wealthy foreigners who have also fallen in love with the island and bought a home there. More than one buxom beauty who once carried building stone all day long, and went barefooted, is now the *châtelaine*



• CAPRI •

of a delightful villa and the mother of *bambini* who will never have to go barefooted or carry stone for their daily bread.

Look at the chart of the island. Notice the natural cliffs dividing it in halves, a quite extraordinary piece of geological freakishness. The island is small, its extreme length no more than four and a half miles east to west, and two miles from north to south, but what concentrated enchantment lies within that small space! Its shores are girt with precipitous cliffs rising to 900 feet above the blue Mediterranean, cliffs riven by deep, purple-shadowed gorges. The limestone hills, covered in some areas with volcanic cinders and ash (*pozzolana*) under a surface soil, are one-third sterile; the rest are fertile with vineyards and orchards, with plums, figs,

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oranges, almonds, olives, and lemons.¹ The highest point is Monte Solaro, over 1900 feet. Until the road was built in 1874 the only access to the highlands was by a stone stairway of 784 steps which had existed from ancient times.

Anacapri (or Ana-Capri), legend says, was founded by Cupid. A pair of young lovers fled from the lower town to the plateau, by scaling the cliffs, and there built a cottage, at the foot of Monte Solaro. Soon other young lovers followed their example, until the highlands became known as the refuge of lovers. Here, later, the Roman emperors found peace from the cares of state and cooling breezes from the sea. The whole island, but especially the highlands, is rich in Roman antiquities. Everywhere are the remains of ancient works, and hardly a foot of ground in Anacapri may be dug without exposing some reminder of Rome. At the Hôtel Grotte Bleu, in Capri, stands a white marble sarcophagus, found on the spot in 1810. When opened it was seen to contain the skeleton of a young girl in what remained of rich garments. By the gold ring and sceptre found with the skeleton she is believed to have been Lucilla, sister of Commodus, who murdered her in A.D. 183. The sarcophagus, a block of white marble with a covering fastened by four iron clamps, is carved in crude bas-relief—a heavy medallion with garlands and Medusa-like heads with wings. The corners are filled with carvings of the skulls of bulls, and the ends with wreaths of roses and leaves. The remains were found with the head resting on a stone pillow. The clothing, gold- and silver-embroidered, fell to pieces on being exposed to the air and could not be saved. By the side of the skeleton lay a pair of armlets, two earrings, a finger-ring with cameos; in the mouth was found a golden piece with the inscription, “Imperator Cæsar Vespasianus Aug. Tr. P.,” with a cornucopia on the reverse side. The

¹ The indigenous flora, of which there are some 800 species, also include citicus, rosemary, mastic shrub, bridal myrtle, albatro, flowering heath, ivy, blackberry, oak, mulberry, cypress, pine, locust, chestnut, walnut, prickly pear, and clematis on the ruins, and golden broom everywhere.

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sceptre was girt with three bands of gold, indicating an imperial princess. Lucilla was murdered at the age of sixteen. The contents were sold by the finders for a hundred francs, the sarcophagus being exhibited under an oleander-tree by the Hôtel Grotte Bleu.

While digging the foundations for his house at Anacapri Dr Munthe, who values great possessions less than most people, came upon an earthen vase brimming with Roman coins, coins of pure gold with an emperor's profile on them. The *contadini* who were helping him were greatly elated, for every Capriote hopes that he may be the lucky man to stumble upon *il tesoro di Timberio* ("the treasure of Tiberius"), Timberio being the local name for the greatest of all the island's residents. Dr Munthe and his helpers also unearthed the bronze hoofs of an equestrian statue, one of which was later stolen by a tourist, who took advantage of the doctor's amiable slackness in guarding his few treasures. They also found several whole or damaged Greek vases, a damaged agate cup of exquisite shape, fragments of early Roman sculpture, dozens of Greek and Roman inscriptions, not to speak of a tessellated pavement in coloured marble and a tomb containing a male skeleton with a Greek coin in its mouth. The presence of the skeleton would scarcely disturb the doctor, and I believe he had it reinterred to rest in peace. San Michele was Dr Munthe's dream villa, built after seven summers' labour, without plans, by peasants—a labour of love.

Of all Roman names connected with Capri that of Tiberius the Emperor is at once the most famous and the most hated, though he is now no longer regarded as the cruel, blood-crazed fiend he was once thought to be, but quite a decent Roman gentleman. His memory, chiefly for evil, still lives in Capri. The local wine is named the Tears of Timberio as good Vesuvian wine is called the Tears of Christ—*Lacrimæ Christi*. So evil is the reputation built round Tiberius that local legend pictures him sitting on a charger of bronze with

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eyes of diamonds, deep down in the bowels of the earth, below the ruins of one of his twelve villas. (These twelve villas were dedicated to the twelve gods; the island is strewn with their ruins.) A youth, wandering among the limestone

ravines, creeping into a cleft in the rocks, found himself on the brink of an enormous black cavern, and, staring down into the darkness, found himself looking into the terrible face of the dead Emperor, mounted on a bronze charger. In terror the youth fled, and so great was his agitation that afterwards he was never able to point out the locality where he had seen the Emperor or his ghost. The little *bambini* of Capri can be heard to this day lisping the dreaded name



TIBERIUS

Timberio when they want to use the equivalent of the English child's 'bogy man.' Near the ruin of the ancient *faro*, or lighthouse (said to rival the Pharos of Alexandria), is an 800-feet drop known as the Salto de Tiberio (Leap of Tiberius), for from here he is supposed to have had his victims cast into the sea, sitting on a dais enjoying the spectacle — a Capriotean holiday. But all this Frankenstein stuff is more than doubtful, and owes its beginning to the slanderous tongues of Tacitus and Suetonius. Napoleon well named the former "a detractor of humanity."

The real Tiberius was a courteous, reserved old gentleman of high intellectual attainments, a well-balanced mind, rather formal in his manners and speech, conscientious, methodical, detesting slipshod ways, an ascetic, scorning the weakness of contemporary dissipation. He was certainly a humane man, and died at the honourable age of seventy-eight, respected by all and hated by few. Men are judged by their deeds,

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but for two thousand years the world accepted the description of him by his enemies, believing that he was a human monster, who indulged his proclivity for cruelty and lust.

Actually he left the island better than he had found it, and a rich treasure-house for future archæologists. His principal palace, the Villa Jovis, stands on a lofty aerie at the eastern end of the island, facing the mainland, and is impressive even as a ruin. Its outer walls cling to a thousand-feet sheer precipice, and so are impregnable from the sea. On the landward side it can only be approached by a single path on which one man could hold an army. The ruin itself is still sufficiently well preserved to permit a complete visualization of it when Tiberius trod its lovely tessellated pavements. Although the vaulted chambers have been open to the sky for twenty centuries, there are still traces of wall frescoes, as at Pompeii, a score of miles away on the main. From one of the hills, a little below it, it can be seen at its best, standing out sublimely impressive against the Italian sky—a castle on a rock.

After the death of Tiberius the island was neglected by the succeeding emperors, and seems to have been used as a place on which to exile those who for some reason or other displeased the ruling emperor. It was here that the wife and sister of Commodus were banished after they had fallen out of grace. Capri's post-Roman history may be disposed of in a series of convenient episodes. After the fall of Rome it was taken by the barbarians, and later by the Greeks, and was claimed by the Greek Duke of Naples. In Norman times it was captured by Roger of Sicily. For centuries



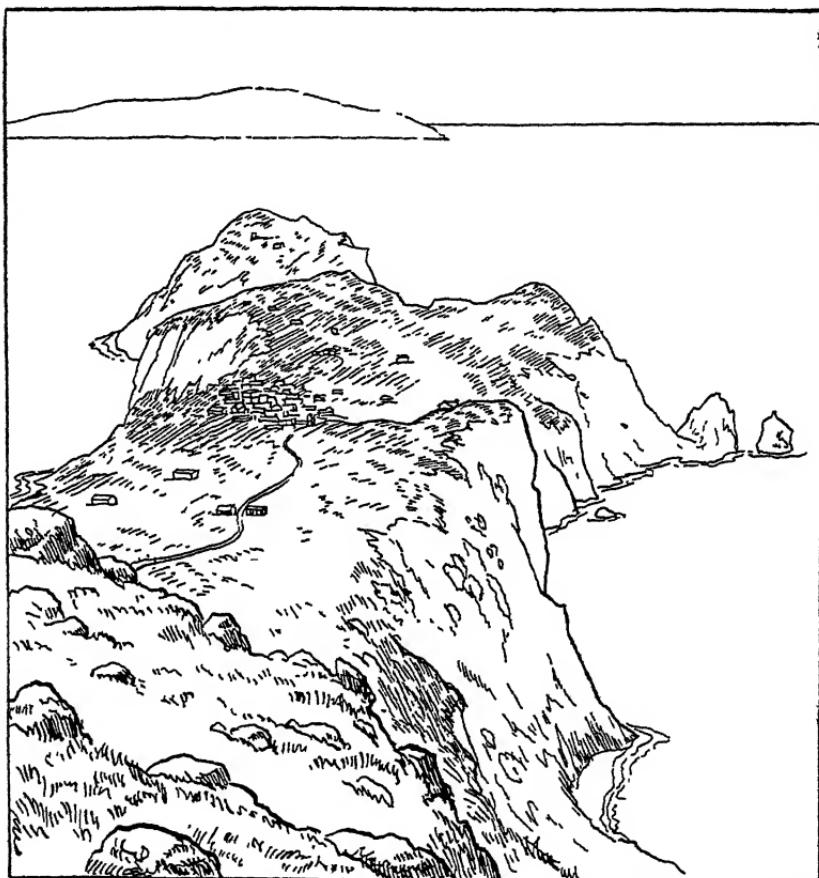
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it was harried by pirates, who became so bold that the inhabitants left the coast, where they had always lived, and moved on to the higher ground where the town of Capri now stands. In 1656 the island was visited by a deadly plague, which wiped out a large portion of the people. During the eighteenth century it was under the rule of the Bourbons, but in 1806 was captured by the British fleet under Sir Sidney Smith, and Hudson Lowe (who later was to receive much criticism for his unbending attitude to Napoleon at St Helena) was installed as governor. But after two years the French, under Lamarque, outflanked the inadequate British garrison by finding means of scaling the cliffs in the night, and so captured the island. In 1815 the French restored it to its natural ruler, Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies. In 1860 it was annexed to Italy, as it should have been long before.

But it is not the dusty bones of history that attract us to Capri, for most of us are by nature somewhat frivolous and desire lighter amusement. I have not travelled the length of Italy, through the burning heat, *comme un véritable bain turc*, as my French *vis-à-vis* in the train described it, through the heat and dust, discomfort, and sleepless nights, to study Capriote antiquities, however wonderful. Like my perspiring fellow-passengers, I hurry ashore from the Naples steamer at the Grande Marina, the chief landing-place, and get into the shade of the arched cloisters of the Albergo Pagano, and there order at least two *gelati* and a *citronnade glacée*, for these tourist places cater for cosmopolitan customers. Outside, in the dazzling sunlight, a sloe-eyed, black-haired, barefooted girl of perhaps eight years, and with a skin the colour of light mahogany, does a few steps of the tarantella and coyly asks for *soldi*. The tourists, mopping their shining faces with damp rags that were once handkerchiefs, suck their iced drinks and call for more. To their right rise steeply the limestone cliffs of Anacapri, and all around the dusty hills are patched with vineyards and green orchards.

THE ISLE OF GROTTES

The sky is an unreal blue, deep cerulean; the sea is pure ultramarine, and between drinks the tourists stop to gaze and admire. But their minds are on the Blue Grotto, for that is the loadstone which has drawn them so far in the

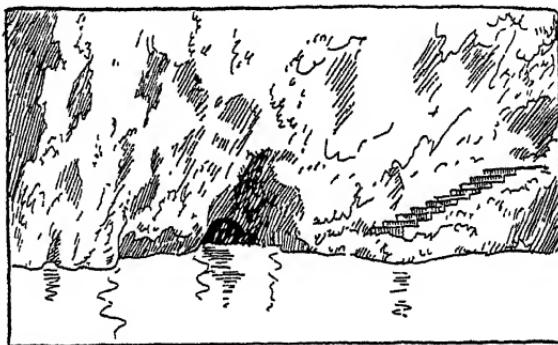


CAPRI, LOOKING EAST FROM MONTE SOLARO

heat. The Blue Grotto's fame has spread even to the skin huts of Lapland. It is unique—there is nothing quite like it in the world. Kentucky can boast of its Mammoth Cave, Staffa of its cavern of Fingal the giant, Grindelwald of its two ice-caves, but these are as nothing compared with the

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sheer ethereal loveliness of Capri's famous grotto. Geologists have been to see it, and come away to write learned pamphlets on the phenomenon, in terms of science, but artists have come away cursing the limitations of their palettes, and poets the stark inadequacy of words. Some have been bold enough to put their æsthetic reactions on record,



ENTRANCE TO THE BLUE GROTTO

and here is Hans Andersen's impression of the phenomenon. The excerpt is from *The Improvisatore*. (The entrance to the grotto, which is from the sea, is so low that only skiffs may enter, and these when the occupants lie prone, the boat propelled through with a final vigorous thrust of the oar.)

The rower took in his oars: we were obliged to lie down in the boat, which he guided with his hands, and we glided into a dark recess beneath stupendous rocks which are washed by the great Mediterranean. Instantly we were in a vast vault, where all gleamed like ether. The water below us was like a blue-burning fire, lighting up the whole. All around was closed in: but beneath the water, the little opening by which we entered prolonged itself almost to the bottom of the sea, forty fathoms in depth, and expanded itself to about the same width. Thus, the powerful sunshine outside threw a reflected light upon the floor of the grotto, and streaming in now like fire through blue water, seemed to change into burning spirit. . . . The drops of spray tossed up by the movement of the oars fell red like fresh rose-leaves. It was a fairy world.

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Speaking of the grotto, that delightful writer Norman Douglas says:

It has slowly but surely routed the rivals of this island; Ischia, Sorrento, and Amalfi are bursting with envy: it has created hotels, steamboats, and driving roads; it has stuffed the pockets of the gentle islanders with gold, transformed shoeless and hatless goat-herds into high-collared Parisian cavaliers; it has altered their characters and faces; given them comfortable homes and a wondrous fine opinion of themselves. *Viva la Grotta Azzurra!*¹

Quite so—just as Switzerland has exploited her mountains, the Riviera her climate, Marienbad its baths, and Munich its beer. The Blue Grotto was formerly known as the Grotta Gradola, and appears thus on old maps. All along this coast are sea caves and grottoes, some green, some white and phosphorescent, and even red. It is a fairy shore: small wonder the sirens were located in these isles. The Blue Grotto is roughly elliptical in shape, a hundred and sixty-three feet long, eighty-three feet wide, and fifty feet from the water to its blue-domed vault. The depth of water inside is from sixty to seventy feet. There is evidence that the water level once stood several feet higher above the sea than at present. The actual opening into the grotto is six and a half feet high, but three of this is under water. The bottom outside the entrance is a perfectly level platform running out some yards into the sea, which is regarded as proof that this was made by man in ancient times, probably Roman, as a landing-stage. A few feet to the right of this platform a large oval hole can be seen, seven or eight feet below the water and extending down more than thirty feet. The water of the bay can, of course, flow freely in and out of the grotto, which can only be entered when the tide and wind are right. Many travellers, pressed for time, have had to return home without seeing the grotto when the wind has been strong from the east or north. A Frenchman, some years ago,

¹ *Siren Land* (J. M. Dent and Sons, London; E. P. Dutton and Co., New York).

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imprudently entering alone when the weather was threatening, was imprisoned by the sea for four days, but was kept alive by fishermen, who, at great risk to themselves, swam in with stimulants. On account of the size of the entrance only a small amount of direct light enters the grotto, though the interior is lit with a strong blue light. The splendour of this azure illumination is due to the refraction of light, decomposed and refracted by its passage through the ultramarine sea. The effect has been likened to a candle-light behind a glass bowl of sulphate of copper. This is daylight refracted through the water from the sea-bottom after absorbing all the colours of the spectrum except blue.¹ The effect is extraordinary and curiously artificial, as though one were in a cave of blue crystal illuminated by concealed lights. If the hand is dipped in the water, or the blade of an oar, it is instantly drenched in glistening silver, and those who have bathed in it describe it as an extraordinary experience, as though they were swimming in a bowl of impalpable silver light; and to dive into the water is to plunge into cold liquid fire rather than the sea. One scarcely seems in water, but floating rather in light, a light of sapphire blue, iridescent, and stained with blue fire—a symphony in azure—shimmering, dancing fairy colour, metamorphosing with its enchanting touch the body of the intrepid swimmer into a silver merman or mermaid. The stalactite-hung, stone-curtained vault is turned to an arch of dripping blue light, until the grotto seems charged with the supernatural, and sea-nymphs and sirens must become instantly manifest.

There are other grottoes along the coast, but none to compare with the Grotta Azzurra. The reason for this is that the others are all more or less open caverns, like deep

¹ The French traveller De Rivaz objects to the refraction theory as the sole cause of the phenomenon:

“On comprend facilement que la réfraction de la lumière ne joue ici non seulement qu’un rôle tout-à-fait secondaire, mais que le phénomène dont il est question dépend principalement de la couleur du milieu à travers lequel les rayons lumineux sont obligés de passer pour arriver jusque dans la grotte.”

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niches in the limestone cliffs, and lack both the mystery and the curious chromatic qualities of their famous rival. As one approaches the island from the sea one notices how the character of the coast suggests the presence of grottoes. The formation of the rocks is architectural. Spires, towers, arches, bridges, castles, and fairy palaces rise from the sea, as though some ancient giants had hewn the cliffs into architectural forms. Lone rocks stand above the sea, honey-combed, tunnelled, and arched like a melting iceberg, and even on the land deep ravines are spanned by natural bridges unaided by the hand of man.

Along this phantom shore is a green grotto, a red, and a white, and the long-lost Grotta Obscura that Addison describes in his *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* in the years 1701, 1702, and 1703. This grotto was 'lost' when the entrance was permanently blocked by a landslide from the cliffs above in 1808. So we depend on the British traveller's word for its appearance:

I entered one, which the inhabitants call Grotta Obscura, and after the light of the sun was a little worn off my eyes, could see all the parts of it distinctly by a glimmering reflection that played about them from the surface of the water. The mouth is low and narrow; but, after having entered pretty far in, the Grotto opens itself both sides in an oval figure of an hundred yards from one extremity to the other, as we were told, for it would not have been safe measuring of it. The roof is vaulted, and distils fresh water from every part of it, which fell upon us as fast as the first drippings of a shower. The inhabitants and Neapolitans who have heard of Tiberius' Grottos, will have this to be one of them, but there are several reasons which show it to be natural. For, besides the little use that we can conceive of such a dark cavern of salt waters, there are nowhere any marks of the chisel; the sides are of soft mouldering stone.

The Blue Grotto, known of in olden times and then forgotten, was rediscovered in 1826 by a German artist named August Kopisch, an artist friend named Fries, and some

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boatmen. This is the popular belief, but Dr Munthe says that it is incorrect, as the grotto was rediscovered in 1822 by a Capri fisherman named Angelo Ferraro. However that may be, Kopisch brought the grotto to the notice of the world, though the world was as slow in response as is damp prairie grass to a burning match. For some years it was only visited by those travellers who could read the remarks concerning it written in the visitors' book at the Albergo Pagano. About 1830 the number of people coming specially to see the grotto was rapidly increasing, and the local fishermen widened the opening for the benefit of their growing tourist trade. The first published account of the grotto appeared in a letter from Mendelssohn to his sisters in May 1831. By 1840 its fame was widespread, thanks to the publicity given it by a large number of writers from all over Europe. Hans Christian Andersen did more than anyone, in his day, to attract world attention to it. Kopisch, after seeing its beauty exploited by contemporary writers, himself published a work on his discovery called *Entdeckung der Blauen Grotte*. Many novelists have made it the scene of a romantic narrative, and it has been the subject of at least one opera—*Die Blaue Grotte*, by P. E. Lorenz.

It is amusing to think that when Kopisch and Fries visited the island again the local *padre* warned them against going to the grotto, as it would be sure to be inhabited by demons who would revenge themselves on the intruders in various terrible ways. On discovering the cave entrance they had found it too low to permit the passage of their boat. Fries had plunged into the water and swum in. A few moments later he was out again, in ecstasies of joy, shouting and swimming in and out the entrance. Kopisch would not rest until he had returned to Naples to bring some friends to see the wonder. In the Albergo Pagano's visitors' book under the date August 17, 1826, he wrote a brief description of the discovery, which, freely translated, runs something as follows:

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I must call the attention of all lovers of beauty and nature to a grotto discovered by indications from our host Giuseppe Pagano, by us and Herr Fries, which the superstitious for centuries feared to enter. It is now only accessible to strong swimmers, but when the sea is calm it might be possible for a small skiff to enter, though this is risky, as the faintest breeze would make it impossible to return. We have christened it the "Blue Grotto" because it is illuminated from the sea-bottom with a blue light. It is astonishing to see the water filling the grotto with what appears blue fire, every wave being a flame.

Within the grotto, Kopisch proceeds, one seemed to have entered an unreal world, or a fairy-tale come true. Daylight and the familiar world had been left behind, and one had entered into a dream world filled with blue light. Bubbles rising from the sea-bottom sparkled like coloured jewels. The walls of the cave were a phantom blue and charged with an eerie luminosity. The silence was the silence of a ghost world, and he felt an irresistible desire to slip down into the magical azure water, a sea of liquid light.

I have seen caves and grottoes, wandered through the galleries of abandoned lead-mines, seen icebergs, the green ice-caverns in at least two glaciers, but none of these can compare in sheer magical wonder with the Blue Grotto of Capri.

Bend low in the boat as the boatman points its bows towards the tiny dark arch that marks the entrance, and when the ocean swell has carried the skiff through you have swept into another world, an enchanted cavern with cerulean blue walls, a domed roof gleaming with azure light from its stalactites, and wavy curtains of stone. In the pellucid sapphire water black-finned fish may be seen lazily moving over the background of white sand, which glitters, jewel-studded, with countless tiny facets of light. Undisturbed, the water is so clear as to be scarcely visible, but splash an oar in it and you have stirred up a bowl of silver-blue fire. Iridescent drops of liquid light fall like silver sparks into the

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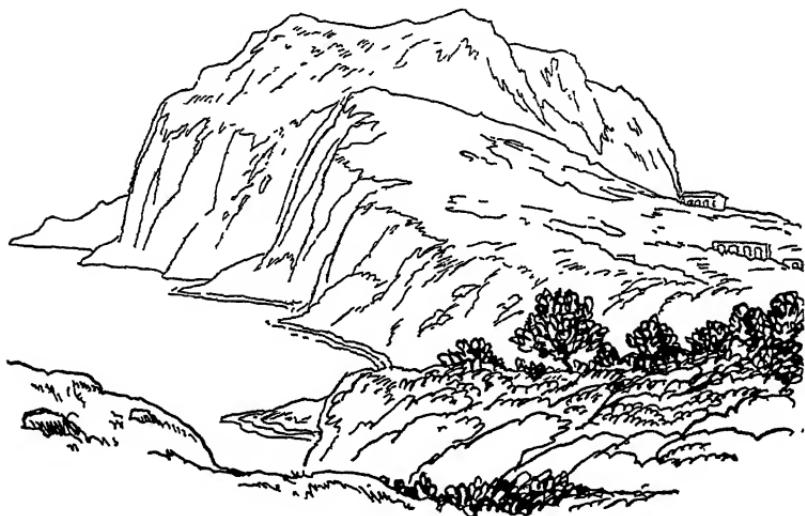
pellucid sea, and the black-finned fish, suddenly possessed of incredible agility, dart across the background of white sand. This is an incredible place, as solid as rock and as impalpable as gossamer, a celestial cloud, a vault of blue crystal, a place to be seen to be believed. The ancients, had they known of it, would have added an eighth wonder to the classic seven. The effect of the Blue Grotto is necessarily æsthetic rather than spiritual, and exclusively an optical one. A myopic person would perforce miss its attraction. It can only appeal through the optic sense, and then only in proportion to the beholder's capacity for æsthetic pleasure, or the sham and almost worthless emotion of excessive sentimentality as felt by Ouida and her school. The spinster Victorian lady, or the amateur who dabbles in art, is transported into such professions of rapture that almost make the rest of us prefer to stay away from a place that affects some people so detrimentally. The Victorians were the worst offenders, as they were in all things where sentiment could be invoked. Their attitude to the beauties of nature is summed up in the line,

Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile.

The tourists return to the Grande Marina in the steamer, which tows astern the string of small boats that were employed to take them through the low entrance to the grotto. The ship and boats, returning to pick up another load of passengers for Capri, must make *lire* while the tourist shines. The sole portal to the grotto cannot be enlarged, lest, by permitting the entrance of too much sunlight, the magic blue luminosity be dissolved. And so visitors must enter one or two at a time, bending low in small boats, and thus escorted and limited for time they may feast their unaccustomed eyes on one of the loveliest places in the world. It is fortunate that the entrance is so diminutive. Otherwise . . . It is possible, for those who prefer to enjoy nature in solitude, to hire a boatman to take them the short

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journey along the coast to the grotto, and, arriving there, slip into the water and swim through. It is not difficult when the tide is right and the sea is calm. And there is within the grotto a ledge where one can climb out of the water and look around one. From one side of the cavern a narrow gallery penetrates upward into the rock. For a long



time it was believed to be a secret passage leading to one of the villas of Tiberius at the summit of the cliff, but of late this belief has been discredited by those who assert that the gallery is nothing more than a natural fissure in the rock, as it narrows into nothing after eighty yards or so. However, one can if one prefers to believe that Tiberius did use this as a secret passage to sport with his maidens, imagine that the subterranean gallery has been partially filled up by a fall of rock, as a hundred odd years ago the Grotta Obscura was sealed.

But what a magnificent notion, one worthy of the imagination of Rider Haggard or Jules Verne! A great and powerful ruler lives in mysterious seclusion in a castle at the summit of a crag overlooking the sea. It is approached by a rocky defile,

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strongly fortified and as impregnable as Gibraltar. Clinging to the dizzy precipices are hanging gardens, a columned temple, pergolas, and vaulted cloisters, surrounding the main pile, a majestic fabric in white marble. Through the living rock, from the very heart of the Ionic pile, a subterranean staircase descends to the secret grotto by the sea, and here mysterious majesty finds diversion, and mayhap slips away to the mainland disguised for self-protection as a fisherman. What a magnificent private swimming-pool that emperor can boast of! But what a climb up again after the swim is over, since the heights above the grotto are something in the neighbourhood of a thousand feet!

It seems quite natural in such a grotto-ridden isle as Capri to expect to meet sirens. Most of the old writers believed in mermen, mermaids, and similar folk, and even honest John

Smith, of Virginia, who was saved by the Indian chief's daughter, Pocahontas, wrote, in 1610, a description of a siren he had seen off the New Brunswick coast. In the ancient royal archives of Portugal are preserved records of litigation between the Crown and a certain nobleman to decide who had rightful claim over the "sirens cast up by the sea" on the nobleman's

property. There are no end of records of this sort still in existence. Some of those who have searched for the Northwest Passage have entered in their log-books accounts of having seen sirens, even to the extent of describing them in detail.

The actual siren rocks supposed to have been the scene of Ulysses' temptation lie in the Gulf of Salerno, some miles from Capri, and consist of five islets, which are now known as Le Galli, but their ancient name was Sirenum. As they



SIREN

From a vase-painting in the
British Museum

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lie but two miles off the mainland, if these were Ulysses' rocks, then he must, at this stage of his odyssey, have been hugging the coast. They lie roughly in a circle and are of Apennine limestone, like Capri, and quite treeless, though covered with flowers in the spring and narcissi in the winter. Also, like Capri, they are prone to form grottoes, which would, of course, account for their attraction for sea-



maids. The flower-covered rocks give off a heavy scent at certain seasons that can be detected well off shore. On the largest isle are relics of Roman buildings. The climate of Capri and Le Galli may be divided roughly into two seasons. From November to April the seas are boisterous, and small craft keep snug in the little stone-built harbours. During this season the islands are isolated for days at a time, and the Mediterranean loses its fabled blueness. In the summer, sea breezes frequently bring relief to the oven-like atmosphere of the islands. When the wind blows off the land it is cool, and is known as the *tramontana*—a name that explains itself—but when it blows across the sea from the south it comes straight from the burning sands of the Sahara, and is the terrible *sirocco*, and will temporarily affect the mental balance of some people. One has the *cafard*, as they say in the Foreign Legion.

Whether Capri harboured sirens or not is a matter for the individual capacity or desire to believe, and that is all

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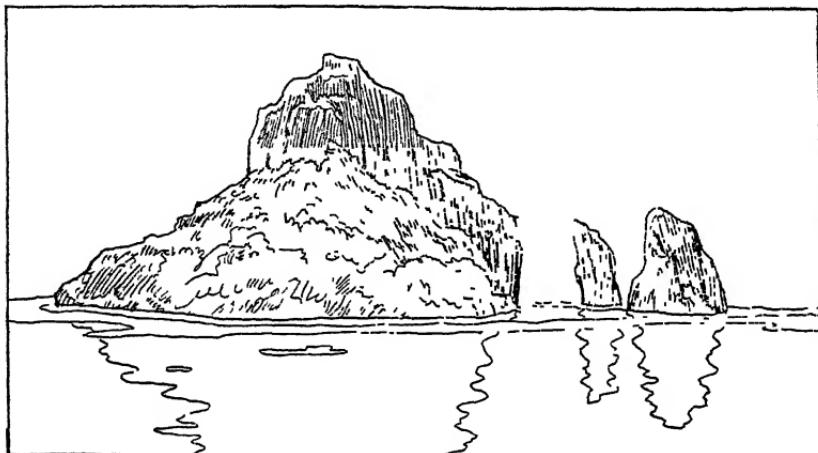
one dare assert, but it is definitely known that in ancient times the island had its troglodyte people. This discovery was made by Dr Cerio during excavations in the Grotta dell' Arco, where he unearthed pottery, which looked like Phœnician work, and a number of human bones. Some imaginative person has suggested that the grotto-dwellers were cannibals who sent their women out to the Le Galli rocks, where they sat naked to lure sailors on to the dangerous reefs; whereupon their men-folk fell on the unfortunate seamen and dispatched them. The cannibal theory seems to arise from the fact that human bones were found skilfully split, as though for the purpose of extracting the marrow! A charming idea, to be sure! And how clever to think of it!

Ulysses had a narrow escape. Not trusting to the efficacy of mere nudity, Homer gives the temptresses of Ulysses dulcet voices, to enhance their charms with singing. In order to escape their enticements Ulysses fills the ears of his companions with wax, that they may not hear the luring voices, and has himself lashed to the mast until the ship has got beyond range of the all but irresistible lure. There is a vase-painting in the British Museum of this incident. The sirens are depicted as eagle-like birds with women's heads; two are perched on steeply overhanging rocks, while the third seems about to fly into the boat itself. The sail is furled, but four rowers pull hard at the oars; Ulysses, with his head thrown back, stands lashed abaft the single mast amidships. The ship has in its bows the typical eye which gave such a fishlike appearance to vessels of the period. Other more or less contemporary drawings of sirens depict them as half bird, half woman, being human from the waist upward except for a pair of good-sized wings springing from their shoulder-blades.

Capri may be said to be a microcosm of Italy, but it is more: it is itself. From the elevation of Monte Solaro the whole island can lie before one, for it is not too large

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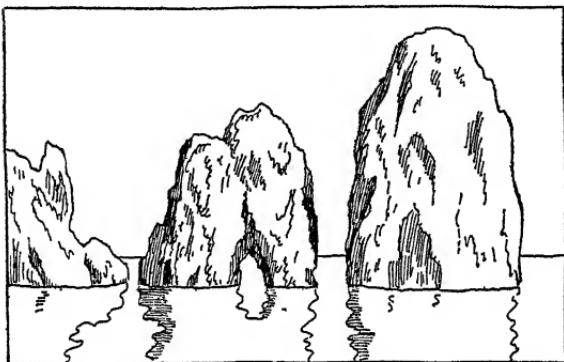
to be encompassed by the eye at one sweep. Close aboard, as it were, is the rough, mottled plateau of Anacapri, the green carpet of trees here and there spotted with tiny white cottages and villas, singly or in clusters. On the hillsides serrated ridges of green indicate vineyards clinging precariously to the slopes, not unlike those on the Rhine. Winding



across the Anacapri uplands, to disappear presently beyond a ridge, is the chalk-white ribbon of a highway that joins the upper and lower towns. From where one stands the island seems to terminate in a precipice the foot of which one cannot see, but beyond, as though it were across an unseen valley, rises into view a rocky mass not unlike Gibraltar. This is the head of the crouching lion that sailors have likened the island to. At the foot of this headland, where its massive ramparts meet the sea, is the thin white line of surf, and on the amazing blue of the sea tiny sailing craft appear motionless; and still some miles off, a long, dark vessel with a thin plume of smoke and a tiny white wake astern, is the Naples excursion steamer, making for the Grande Marina, the diminutive port for Capri. Before one on the right hand, standing out of the sea close to the cliffs, are the three symmetrical pinnacles of the Faraglione rocks.

ENCHANTED ISLES

On Monte Solaro is the most luxurious of all the villas of Tiberius, and at the mountain's foot the man-improved cavern of Matromania, containing architectural fragments from Roman times. To the east, three miles distant, is the peninsula of Sorrento, and still farther, to the north-east, perhaps twenty miles, is the sinister cone of Vesuvius, a smudge of grey smoke hanging over her truncated summit,



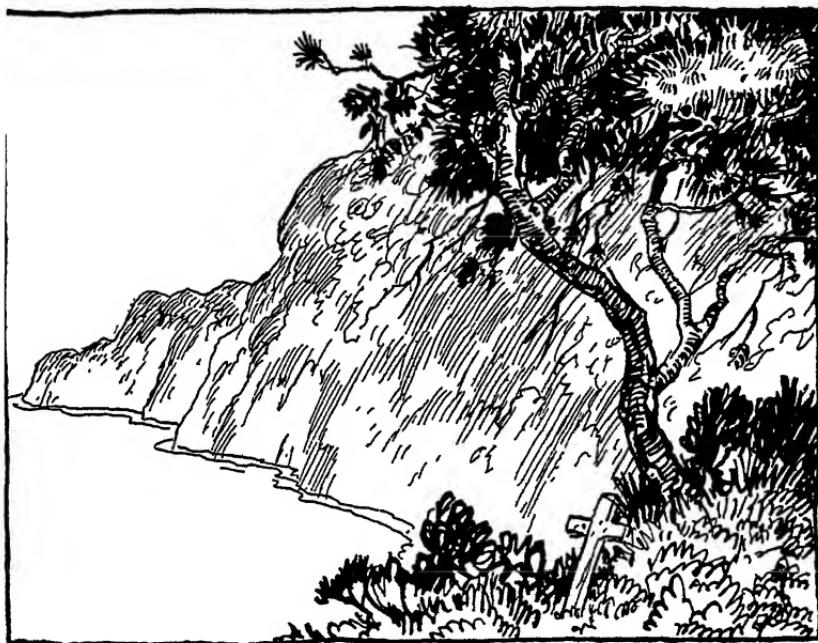
FARAGLIONE ROCKS

as a reminder to Neapolitans that she is still a power to be respected. The little boats have moved across the blue table below while one has looked elsewhere, but they don't seem to be going anywhere in particular, for they are fishermen. Even from the mountain-top one can distinguish the curious exotic shape of their sails, the horn point of the lateen rig so characteristic of the Mediterranean.

Nature made this isle for the delectation of man, but until modern times none save Tiberius seems to have realized this. Tiberius had twelve imperial villas built on its enchanting hills and lived there ten years, but after this great connoisseur was dead no one came forward to take his place. For almost two thousand years the island was allowed to slip into desuetude and semi-barbarism, until the rediscovery of the Blue Grotto and the improvement in facilities for travel put Capri on the modern map. The Capriotes are become, as it were, grotto-conscious. They fully understand

THE ISLE OF GROTTOS

ts value, and make the most of what nature has given them. Even Tiberius and the Roman archæological treasures of the island must take second place to the Grotta Azzurra. Ruins of villas, the beauties of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian art, a few bronze coins, or terra-cotta jars, or a fragment of a

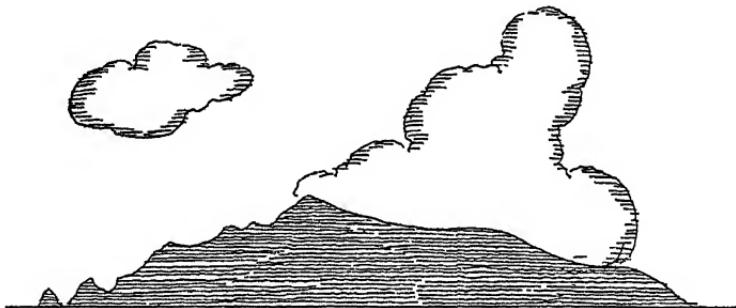


peristyle, or tessellated pavement may appeal to the connoisseurs and archæologists, but the grotto is understood by every one. It is the living proof that fact is stranger than fiction, that nature can outdo in sheer unrestrained colour the maddest or most sentimental dauber that ever lived.

We look again over this fairy isle and envy the fortunate people whose privilege it is to live here. We experience the pain of nostalgia at the thought that we must return to our own country. We would be Italian, Capriote—anything to remain here, never to leave it. We remember, with a pang, how we have let the days of our stay slip by almost thoughtlessly. Certainly wastefully. We have spent too much time

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drinking cold drinks at the Caffè Morgano, or sitting over dinners that we couldn't afford in the painted *sala da pranzo* of the Albergo Pagano, the best-known caravanserai of Capri. We have enjoyed too many a *dolce far niente* in the shade, when we should have been doing the sketches we meant to do, but never did. We have shamelessly visited the Blue Grotto in company with people we hated, and never once had the cavern to ourselves, as more enterprising



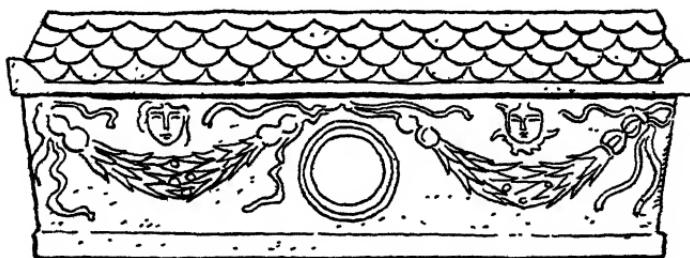
folk do. We were too hot and tired climbing in the midday sun to have an undivided mind for the wonders of the Villa Jovis, and we never went again. We thought too much of the shade and cool drinks, and of the path of least resistance, for our own soul's good. We never saw the tarentella danced properly, as we had determinedly intended to, but we heard some ragtime on a raucous phonograph. We never went for a day's sail in one of the lovely Capriote lateeners, nor won the confidence of the island fishermen, as had been our plan. We leave full of regrets, but the more determined to come again. Hampstead seems a long way from Monte Solaro—the crossing to Naples; a night in the Vesuvian city; then in the huge train of the Strade Ferrate Italiani, with its ubiquitous Fascisti guards, rushing swiftly up the length of Italy—Caserta, Roccasecca, Roma, Civitavecchia, Livorno, Pisa, Spezia, Levanto, Rapallo, Genova, Alessandria, Torino to Modane, on the frontier. The Alps are before us; our carriage, marked in embossed letters “Compagnia Internazionale delle Carrozze con Letti,” is joined to

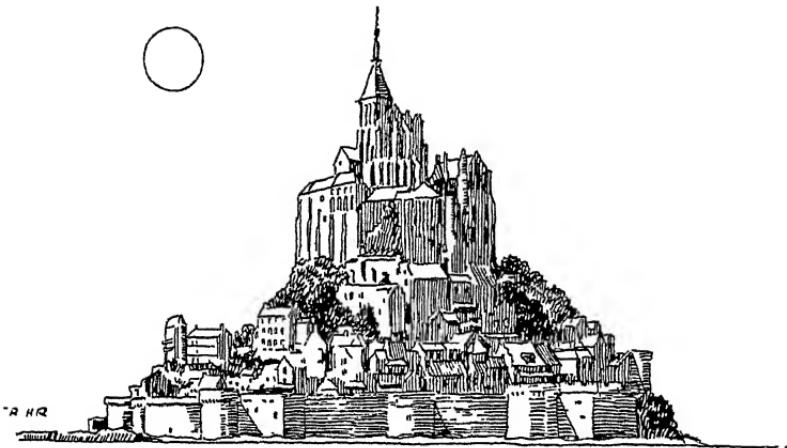
THE ISLE OF GROTTOES

another train, and we are roaring through Swiss valleys and dizzy Alpine scenery. Capri, the Mediterranean, the Grotta Azzurra, the lovely, olive-skinned peasant girls who smiled at us (or was it laughed?), and the bland *cameriere* at the Albergo Pagano seem a dream. Surely it was not yesterday that we were in Naples! In the cool Alpine air we put on a woolly pullover, and cannot believe we were but so recently sweltering in a *véritable bain turc*. Through the train window we feel the cool touch of what yesterday we would have familiarly referred to as the *tramontana*, and wonder secretly to ourselves what the *sirocco* is like when the everyday temperature is something that has to be felt to be believed.

The next day we are rushing across the flat plains of Picardy, nearing Calais and home. We look towards our fellow-travellers, and wonder if any of them have seen Capri. By the look of them we decide that they have not, and nurse a pleasurable feeling of possessing all to ourselves a delicious secret, regardless of the fact that a few thousand tourists must have visited the island while we were there.

The Channel is rough, and we are too ill to think of aught but our wretched body, until Dover breakwater brings respite from the sea's buffeting. Two hours more and we are at Victoria, and as we step off the train almost the first thing we see is a lithographed poster of some cypress-trees on a hill overlooking a blue, blue sea, and across a cobalt sky is writ in large block lettering the word CAPRI.





CHAPTER IX

Island Miscellany

ALCRANES. Low islands in the Gulf of Mexico, and the scene of one of the most astonishing adventures and miraculous escapes in all maritime records: to wit, the casting away and subsequent redemption of one Richard Falconer, in the year 1700.

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. Archipelago tying Alaska to Siberia. Also known as Fox Islands, from black, red, and grey foxes that once abounded there. Fox is a common name in island lore, as any gazetteer will show.

AMSTERDAM ISLAND. Southern Indian Ocean. Scene of many wrecks.

ANDAMAN ISLANDS. Bay of Bengal. Natives a negroid race. Still in savage state.

ANGLESEY. A rock set out in the Irish Sea, off North-west Wales, for the confusion of shipping bound in and out of the Mersey. All wise navigators give it a good offing, especially with an on-shore wind.

ANTICOSTI. Large isle in the St Lawrence estuary. Colonized by French settlers.

ISLAND MISCELLANY

ANTIGUA. British West Indies. One of the sugar and rum isles. Lies in the hurricane area. Discovered by Columbus in 1493.

ARAN ISLANDS. Off the west coast of Ireland. Still somewhat primitive, and harbouring leprechauns and the little people, despite gramophones and sewing-machines. The islands are exposed to the Atlantic combers, rolling unhindered two thousand miles from America. Not to be confused with Arran, off the Firth of Clyde, remarkable for its lofty granite mountains.

ARBE (or RAB). Slavonic isle in the North Adriatic. Part of Dalmatia. Once Venetian.

ASCENSION. Small volcanic isle in the South Atlantic, and known sometimes among seafarers as Stone Frigate Island. Used as a coaling station. About 750 miles north-west of St Helena.

AUCKLAND ISLANDS. In the South Pacific, south of New Zealand. Stormy climate. Noted for shipwrecks.

AZORES. Sometimes called the Western Islands. They are ten in number, and are thought by some to be all that is left of the lost Atlantis. Tennyson discovered that Azores rhymes with Flores, with the result that ever since they are remembered principally in connexion with the names Grenville and *Revenge*. They attract tourists, but are not loved by mariners, as they lack harbours.

BAHAMAS. They form a breakwater to the southern end of the Florida peninsula, and were in olden times the rendezvous of buccaneers. Frequently visited by oceanographers and scientists studying submarine life.

BAHREIN ISLANDS. In the Persian Gulf. Once a pirates' nest, now a pearling ground.

BALEARIC ISLES. The classic name for Majorca and Minorca and their satellites. Now discovered by tourists, foreign authors and artists. Also the home of a number of picturesque brigands.

ENCHANTED ISLES

BALI. Malay Archipelago. One of the few unspoiled islands left.

BANANA ISLES. Small group off Cape Shilling, West Africa.

BARANOFF ISLAND. Alaska. Here is situated the capital, Sitka.

BARBADOS. One of the more important isles of the West Indies. Also one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with a population (1921) of well over 150,000, and this on an island the size of the Isle of Wight.

BARENTS. Spitzbergen. Old-time sealing and whaling ground.

BARRA. Outer Hebrides. The people are mainly Catholic, and Gaelic is the favoured tongue.

BARREN ISLAND. There are at least five of this name—namely, at Long Island, Newfoundland, Tasmania, Bay of Bengal, and a group off Alaska.

BAY ISLANDS. Group in the Gulf of Honduras. It was here that Philip Ashton spent nine months alone.

BEAR ISLANDS. Group in the Arctic off Siberian coast. Also a group in James Bay, Canada.

BEDLOE'S ISLAND. New York Harbour. Here stands the largest statue in the world—Bartholdi's bronze figure of Liberty. The island takes its name from one Bedloe, its former owner.

BELLE-ÎLE. Bay of Biscay. Delightfully primitive, though slowly being spoiled by invading tourists. Once captured by the English, it was returned to France in exchange for the French colony of Acadia (Acadie), many of whose people returned to Europe and settled on Belle-Île. It has a namesake, Belle Isle, off the Newfoundland shore, which may be seen by travellers entering or leaving the northern entrance to the Gulf of St Lawrence.

BERING ISLAND. Bering Sea. Named after the explorer who discovered it in 1741.

BERMUDA ISLANDS. Known to Elizabethan sailors as the Isle of Devils, a foul slander which is said to have inspired

ISLAND MISCELLANY

Shakespeare to write *The Tempest*. It was the scene of *The Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight*—written by William Strachy, Esquire, in Churchill's *Voyages*.

BIRD ISLAND. Uninhabited isle in the Caribbean, west of Dominica. Also group of the Lesser Antilles.

BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO. A large group in the Western Pacific. Named after the Iron Chancellor.

BONAVVENTURE ISLAND. There are at least two Bonaventure Islands: one off the coast of New Brunswick, the other on the starboard side of the entrance to Porto Bello, and found useful by Morgan when he sacked and pillaged that ill-starred city.

BONAVISTA ISLAND. One of the Cape Verde group, and only included here for the sake of its charming name.

BONIN ISLANDS. Group in the North Pacific belonging to Japan.

BOON ISLAND. A granite ledge ten miles off the Maine coast. Memorable as the scene of the tragic wreck of the *Nottingham* galley in 1710. Now marked by a lighthouse.

BORNEO. Malay Archipelago. One of the world's largest islands. Famous for its wild men.

BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND. The largest of the Savage Solomons.

BUTE. One of the picturesque rocky isles in the Firth of Clyde.

CAIMANS (or CAYMANS). A cluster of isles between Jamaica and Cuba, and once overrun by tortoises. Cayman is the name of the South American alligator.

CANARIES. Seven in number, and situated fifty leagues west of Cape Nun, on the coast of Africa. The best-known of the group are Grand Canary, Teneriffe, and Palma.

CAPE SABLE ISLAND. At the southern extremity of Nova Scotia.

CAPE VERDE ISLANDS. Portuguese archipelago off West African coast. They can boast one active volcano.

ENCHANTED ISLES

CAPRI. See Chapter VIII.

CARAK ISLAND. About five miles long and two broad, and lying midway between the shores of Persia and Arabia in the Persian Gulf. Owes its inclusion here to its suggestive name, which refers, of course, to the later medieval ships known as caracks, and greatly favoured by the Portuguese, who were first in the Indian Ocean.

CARGADOS (or GARAYOS). Group of sandbanks in the Indian Ocean. Here the Indiaman *Cabalva* was wrecked.

CAROLINE ISLANDS. Also known as the Pelew Islands. A group of 652 isles in Micronesia, Oceania. Here the *Antelope* was wrecked in 1783.

CARVEL OF ST THOMAS. Likewise an island named from a ship—namely, carvel, or caravel, contemporaneous with the carack. It is a great rock between the Virgin Islands and Porto Rico, and at a short distance appears like a sail, being white and having two points.

CATALINA ISLAND. A small and salubrious isle lying in the Pacific some miles south-west of San Pedro Bay, California opposite, and known for its fine tunny-fishing. Frequently used as a tropical background by the Hollywood moving-picture companies. Principal resort, Avalon.

CELEBES. See Macassar Island.

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO. String of atolls in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The German raider *Emden* called there in 1914.

CHANNEL ISLANDS. A geographical anomaly lying off the coast of France, but belonging to England. Greatly exploited by tourist agencies. Regarded as a convenient alibi for those who wish to avoid income-tax in England.

CHATHAM ISLAND. Principal isle of the Galapagos group.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND. There are three islands of this name—one in the Indian Ocean, another in the Pacific, and

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the third off Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. That in the Pacific is believed to be the largest atoll in the world, being a hundred miles round.

CLIPPERTON ISLAND. An annular coral atoll in the Pacific, and named after Captain Clipperton, the privateer, and partner of Captain George Shelvocke.

Cocos. There are at least two isles bearing this name, one of which is fully dealt with in Chapter II. Another is the Cocos-Keeling, in the Indian Ocean, visited during the Great War by the German raider *Emden*, which destroyed the cable station before being herself destroyed by the Australian cruiser *Sydney*.

COMORO ISLANDS. A famous *pied-à-terre* for Indian Ocean pirates in the bad old days. They lie about midway between Madagascar and the African littoral. More than one East Indiaman was wrecked there.

CONEY ISLAND. A narrow sandy strip, five miles long and half a mile broad, lying at the south-west angle of Long Island, New York. Is the home of the greatest collection of vulgar and noisy side-shows the world has ever seen. Also a small isle in Sligo Bay, Ireland. Also one of the Balearic Isles, and at one time overrun with rabbits. Also an island off Saldanha Bay, three miles off shore.

CONTRARIÉTÉ ISLAND. One of the Savage Solomons.

CORFU. A Greek isle at the entrance to the Adriatic, and a bone of contention between the European Powers for a thousand years. At one time a summer residence of the All-highest, König and Kaiser, William II of Germany. Like Capri, a favourite resort for artists who can find enough money to travel so far. The natives speak Greek and Italian.

CORSICA. The birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte and the classical home of the vendetta. It lies about thirty leagues south of Genoa, and once harboured a long line of most bloodthirsty pirates or corsairs. Here is

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another historic and geographic anomaly, for, although the island belongs to France, the people are to all intents and purposes Italian.

CRETE (or **CANDIA**). A large island in the Mediterranean.

For centuries a bone of contention between the European dogs of war.

CROZETS. Small uninhabited group in the South Indian Ocean. The scene of many shipwrecks, the best known being that of the *Strathmore* in 1875.

CUBA. The largest of the West Indies. Still remains delightfully Spanish and old-world despite the introduction of many American customs and ideals.

CYPRUS. A Levantine island sixty miles west of the Syrian coast. Annexed by Great Britain in 1914. Originally inhabited by the Phoenicians, then by the Greeks, who have left the soil rich in relics of antiquity, which have gone to enlarge the collections of the more important museums of Europe.

CYTHERA. An island off the south coast of Greece, noted mainly for its mythological and romantic associations.

DEAD CHEST ISLAND. One of the smaller Virgin Isles of the West Indies, and smacking of buccaneers.

DECEIT ISLAND. West-north-west from the west entrance to the Sunda Strait.

DEVIL'S ISLAND (or **ÎLE DE SALUT**). French Guiana penal settlement. The scene of Dreyfus's banishment and that of a host of less famous characters.

DOG'S ISLAND. Another of the smaller Virgin Isles. The Isle of Dogs is a less Arcadian spot in one of the bends of the Thames below London, and the site of the famous Blackwall Yard, where East Indiamen were built.

DOMINICA ISLAND. There are two: one in the Marquesas, in the Pacific; and the larger and more important in the Leeward Archipelago of the West Indies. Palms, sugar, rum, and negroes are its most salient features.

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DOUBTFUL ISLAND. First seen by Bougainville. Lies in the South Pacific, in latitude $17^{\circ} 20'$ South, longitude $142^{\circ} 23'$ West.

DRAKE'S ISLAND. Lies off the harbour of Porto Bello. Also the rock in the middle of Plymouth Sound.

EAGLE ISLAND. A small isle in Penobscot Bay, Maine.

EASTER ISLAND. The mystery island in the South Pacific. The riddle of its grotesquely carved monoliths and cryptic inscriptions has never been solved.¹ In the portico of the British Museum stand two of these grim black stone figures, brought back by H.M.S. *Topaze* about 1870.

EDDYSTONE ROCKS. Five leagues south of Plymouth, in the English Channel. Noteworthy for being crowned by one of the handsomest lighthouses in the world. The light is maintained by the Corporation of Trinity House. At least three other islets, all in the Southern Hemisphere, have been distinguished with the name Eddystone—off the Australian, Falkland, and Patagonian coasts.

EGG ISLAND. It is remarkable what a number of widely separated isles bear this curious name. They may be discovered in Delaware Bay, in the Scottish Hebrides, in the St Lawrence estuary, in the Strait of Magellan, and off the south-west coast of Tierra del Fuego.

ELBA. Lies in the channel between Corsica and Italy. Was granted to Napoleon as a residence and sovereignty after his deposition in 1814.

ELEPHANT ISLAND. The ice-covered rock where Shackleton's men were cast away after the loss of the *Endurance* in 1915. From this island they were rescued at the eleventh hour by a miracle of good fortune. The story may be found in Shackleton's book *South*. The island lies in 61° South, and south-east of Cape Horn.

¹ The author's book *The Pacific* contains a fuller account of this island.

ENCHANTED ISLES

ELLIS ISLAND. America's Isle of Lost Hopes. The immigration station in New York Harbour.

ENGLISH BANK. A place to be avoided in the Indian Ocean, and lying, according to Malham, in $17^{\circ} 56'$ North, $39^{\circ} 3'$ East.

ENGLISH ISLANDS. A small group lying off the south-eastern part of the island of Martinique, in the West Indies.

ESPIRITU SANTO. One of the notorious cannibal islands of the New Hebrides, in Melanesia. Natives of a very low type, treacherous and unfriendly.

FAIR ISLE. One of the Shetlands. Here are made the bright-patterned woollen pullovers.

FALKLAND ISLANDS. A group of no less than two hundred islands, lying some two hundred and fifty miles north-east of Tierra del Fuego. East and West Falkland the only two of importance, however. A treeless, austere country, not attractive to lovers of the flesh-pots and other amenities of a softer civilization. Noted, among other things, as the birthplace of a famous living English actress.

FANNING ISLANDS. An archipelago in the North Pacific, included in which is the Christmas Island already referred to. Here is one of the loneliest cable stations in the world.

FERNANDEZ (or JUAN FERNANDEZ). The island of lonely men. Here certain mariners were willingly or unwillingly set ashore to live alone. The most prominent of these marooned men was Stradling's mate Alexander Selkirk, who lived there alone for four and a half years before being picked up. His narrative is retold in the author's book *Crusoes and Castaways*.

FERNANDO DE NORONHA. A lonely volcanic rock in the South Atlantic 125 miles from the Brazilian shore. Strongly fortified and used as a Brazilian convict station.

FIJI. About 225 reef-girt isles in the South Pacific, and

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known the world over for the golliwog-like *coiffure* of their dusky aborigines. In Captain Cook's time they were quaintly spelled Feejeeans.

FIRE ISLAND. Small island five miles off eastern end of Long Island, New York. Lighthouse and signal station. Beloved of all Atlantic travellers approaching the United States. Also a small island in the Indian Ocean off the East African coast.

FLORES. Already noted in connexion with the Azores. There is also a Flores eastward of Java. It is also known as Ende Island.

FLY ISLAND. English for the well-known Vlieland, in the Zuyder Zee.

FORLORN ISLAND. Also called Lost Island. Lies off the east coast of South America. Said to have been formerly a large island, the greater part of which has sunk into the sea; hence its name.

FORMOSA. An important island off the coast of China, from which it is separated by the Strait of Formosa. The Chinese and Japanese call it Taiwan—which, like Formosa, means ‘beautiful.’ Once Chinese, it was ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. Has attracted relatively few Japanese, however, the population still consisting almost entirely of Chinese. Aborigines number as many as 150,000.

FRIENDLY ISLANDS. Also called the Tonga Islands. Received their English name from Captain Cook, out of gratitude for the unwonted amicable reception from the natives. Polynesian group south of Samoa.

FUNCHAL. One of the Madeira group. Now one of the tourist Meccas.

GALAPAGOS. The Pacific post-office. Here the old whalers left their letters in a barrel, to be collected by home-ward-bound ships. The islands were at one time swarming with enormous tortoises, some of which have found their way to English zoological gardens. The

ENCHANTED ISLES

group (thirteen isles) lies about 730 miles west of Ecuador.

GINGER ISLAND. Another one of the quaintly named Virgin group.

GOAT ISLAND. One of the Juan Fernandez isles. Also an isle in the Indian Ocean. Also divides the Horseshoe from the Niagara Falls. Also off Newport, Rhode Island. Also one of the Philippines. Also in the Azores.

GOODWIN SANDS. An island at low tide. Once part of Kent and belonging to Earl Godwin. Inundated by the sea, it has become one of the most dangerous shoals in the world, and never a winter passes without the sands taking their toll of shipping.

GRACIOSA. One of the Azores, and included for the sake of its enchanting name. The Canaries, I believe, also claim a Graciosa.

GREEN ISLAND. There are over a dozen different islands of this name, and in order to be impartial we will eschew describing any of them.

GUAM ISLAND. One of the Ladrone Islands (so named by Magellan from the thieving propensities of the natives), and now a United States naval base for the Philippines.

GUANO ISLAND. On the Peruvian coast, and evidently the home of generations of sea-fowl.

HAITI. See Hispaniola.

HEBRIDES. The Western Isles of Scotland: Lewis, North Uist, South Uist, Skye, Mull, Jura, Islay, Arran, and nearly three hundred smaller ones. New Hebrides is the name given to the group of cannibal isles in Melanesia.

HELIGOLAND. More properly Helgoland. Acquired by Germany from England in 1890. Came into prominence during the Great War by reason of its strategic position.

HISPANIOLA. The romantic old name for the island of

ISLAND MISCELLANY

Haiti, the one-time haunt of the Caribbean buccaneers, and now the home of voodoo. Discovered by Columbus in December 1492, and run by the descendants of African slaves with not always happy results. One of the Greater Antilles, and, after Cuba, the largest of the West Indian islands.

HOG ISLAND. One of the dangerous Crozets, in the Southern Indian Ocean. A large island (sixty miles long) off Western Sumatra. One of the Bahamas. Off the coast of Maine near Machias. Off the Virginia Coast.

HOG ISLANDS. A small group off County Kerry at the mouth of the Kenmare river.

HOLE-IN-THE-WALL ISLAND. There are two distinct islands of this name—one in the Bahamas and the other in the East Indian Ocean, and sometimes called Chapel Island.

HOLY ISLAND (LINDISFARNE). Off the Northumberland coast. Its beginnings are wrapped in mystic legend. Was once a bishop's see. As a matter of fact, there are several Holy Islands in the world. Those named by Latin discoverers may, of course, always be distinguished by the prefix Santa or Santo.

HONDO. The principal island of Japan. Sometimes called Nippon. Here are situated the principal cities, also the sacred mountain Fujiyama. The island is 800 miles long.

ICELAND. The name given by the early Danes to a salubrious and fertile isle in order to discourage (so it is said) foreign invaders, while in order to encourage colonists to Greenland (Groenland) they gave that name to a land that was neither green nor salubrious. Lies in the North Atlantic.

IF ISLAND. The forbidding fortress Château d'If, opposite Marseilles, in the Mediterranean.

ILE DE CÉZEMBRE. Rocky isle a few miles off the Brittany coast, opposite Saint-Malo.

ILE DE DIEU. In the Bay of Biscay, off the French shore.

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INCHCAPE Rock. Off the east Scottish coast. About a mile long and a cable's length broad. 'Inch' means 'island' in many parts of Scotland, and is commonly seen in hyphenated island names.

ISLAND No. 10. In the Mississippi river. Fought over by the North and South during the Civil War.

ISLE OF PINES (ISLA DE PINOS). One of the famous buccaneer islands, and lying off the Cuban coast. A rival to Tortuga for pirate patronage.

ISLE OF SHOALS. Summer resort off Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

ISLE OF WIGHT. Vectis of Roman Britain. Off Hampshire, England. Made famous by Queen Victoria, who died there in 1901. It is interesting to note that there are two places of this name in the United States—one a county, the other a post hamlet, and both in Virginia.

ISOLA BELLA. One of four islands lying in the Bay of Tosa, Lake Maggiore. An islet of miraculous beauty, fully justifying its name. Once a barren rock, in 1671 the Count Borromeo summoned architects and landscape gardeners, and bid them transform the spot into a fairyland, a work of love which they performed uncommonly well.

JAMAICA. One of the more important of the West Indian isles. Immortal for its rum and sugar.

JOANNA. One of the famous Comoro group, off the Madagascar coast on the African side.

KERGUELEN. In the South Indian Ocean. The world's most ragged island, with a coastline indented by innumerable fiords. The home of sea-elephants and a curious but useful plant known as the 'land cabbage.' The island is owned by France, but coveted by none. It is aptly called Island of Desolation.

KIUSHIU. Southern island of Japan. Possesses volcano, Aso-san (5630 feet), with a crater twelve miles round. Chief town, Nagasaki.

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LADRONES. Western Pacific. Discovered by Magellan in 1521, and named by him Las Islas de los Ladrones—*i.e.*, the Islands of the Thieves—on account of the dishonesty of the natives.

LIPARI ISLES. A group (Italian) north of Sicily and all volcanic, two being active volcanoes—Vulcano and Stromboli.

LOBOS. From *lobo*, a Spanish word meaning ‘wolf.’ The Spaniards were fond of christening islands after the wolf. I can trace at least six isles named Lobos in various parts of the world: one off the Canaries, one off Uruguay, another in the Gulf of California, a fourth in the Gulf of Mexico, a fifth near Cape Blanco, Northwest Africa, and finally the Lobos Islands off the Peruvian coast. The sea will not lack its wolves while the Spanish language lives.

LOFODEN (or LOFOTEN) ISLES. Off the north-west coast of Norway, and perhaps best known to the foreigner for the adjacent whirlpool—the sinister Maelstrom, used by Jules Verne and Edgar Allan Poe when they wished to horrify us.

LONG ISLAND. Here is another name that identifies at least twenty different islands, and for that reason we will leave it in peace.

LUNDY ISLAND. In the Bristol Channel, and once owned by a family named Heaven. Thus the Kingdom of Heaven.

LUZON. The largest of the Philippines.

MACASSAR ISLAND. Hence Macassar oil, hence anti-macassar, or anti (hair) oil, on the backs of Victorian arm-chairs. Macassar is the old name: it is now generally known as Celebes, and lies in the East Indies. It is the most curiously shaped island in the world.

MADAGASCAR. The largest island in the Indian Ocean. Shaped like a shoe with a flat sole.

MALAITA. One of the Savage Solomons.

ENCHANTED ISLES

MALDIVE ISLANDS. (Thousand Isles.) Archipelago in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Seventeen coral atolls governed by a sultan, and tributary to Ceylon.

MALTA. Anciently known as Iperia, and by the Greeks as Melite; whence came its present name. Charles V gave the island to the Order of St John of Jerusalem (1530), who are called the Knights of Malta. Hence Maltese cross. Since the Napoleonic wars it has belonged to England.

MAN ISLAND. Commonly called the Isle of Man, lying in the Irish Sea, and not to be confused with the Island of Man between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The former famed for its tailless cats.

MANHATTAN ISLAND. Once a wilderness, now covered with the skyscrapers of New York. Composed of ancient rocks (gneisses and schists), it has provided a foundation to make the city's fantastic buildings possible.

MARKEN. In the Zuyder Zee. Chief industries, fishing and supplying picturesque backgrounds for artists.

MARQUESAS. Fully accounted for in Chapter VII.

MAURITIUS. Fully accounted for in Chapter V.

MELOS. One of the Greek islands. It was here that the armless Aphrodite in marble was found in 1820.

MINDANAO. The largest of the Philippines after Luzon.

MOLUCCAS. The original Isles of Spice. Part of the Malay Archipelago.

MONT SAINT-MICHEL. The fairy castle on a rock. The loveliest thing in France. Lies about a mile off shore, opposite the border of Brittany and Normandy. Has a dozen imitators, but none so fair.

MULL. See Chapter III.

NANTUCKET ISLAND. Lies east of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and once noted for its great sperm-whale fleet. Now a signal station, invaluable to the Atlantic ferry service.

NAVIGATOR'S ISLANDS. A coral group in the South Pacific.

ISLAND MISCELLANY

NEW GUINEA. Large island north of Australia. The natives are blacks and are of a primitive type.

NICOBAR ISLANDS. In the cyclone area of the Bay of Bengal, and neighbours of the curious Andaman Isles.

NORFOLK ISLAND. Best known as the one-time home of some of the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers. In the South Pacific.

OAK ISLAND. Nova Scotia. Made famous as the home of the greatest treasure-trove mystery of all time. See Chapter II.

ORKNEYS. To the north of Scotland. A convenient shelter for lurking enemy submarines during the Great War. Ruled during the Middle Ages by Scandinavian jarls, or earls. In 1468 passed to the Scots Crown.

OTAHEITI. The charming old name for Tahiti, one of the Society group. See Chapter IV.

OUESSANT. The way the French spell the name of their own isle Ushant, off the Brittany coast.

PALMA. One of the Canary Isles, once collectively known as the Islands of the Blest.

PAPUA. Another name for New Guinea.

PEARL ISLANDS. More properly the Low Archipelago, alias Paumotu, alias Tuamotu. They are mostly coral atolls, and lie in the romantic South Seas.

PELEW ISLANDS. See Caroline Islands.

PENGUIN ISLAND. Off the Cape of Good Hope, and not to be confused with Anatole France's creation. There are four others of this name: one off Patagonia, another off Australia, a third in Newfoundland waters, and a fourth one of the Crozets.

PHAROS ISLAND. Once the site of the celebrated light of Alexandria erected by the Ptolemys. Now an artificial peninsula.

PHILIPPINES. Spanish islands in the Pacific, taken by the United States during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

ENCHANTED ISLES

PIRATE ISLANDS. A group off the coast of China in the Tongking Gulf.

PITCAIRN ISLAND. The lonely isle in the South Pacific to which the *Bounty* mutineers fled, after setting Lieutenant Bligh and nineteen men adrift in a boat in the Pacific, in the year 1789. Nine British sailors, six native men, and twelve women (Tahitians) landed there in 1790, choosing the spot for its isolation. They were discovered in 1808, but not interfered with. The remainder of the mutineers, found at Tahiti, were taken to England, where three were hanged. The modern descendants of the original colonists are of mixed blood, well behaved, and without ambition, save to be left alone. Some of those who moved to Norfolk Island returned after a time to Pitcairn. "Be it ever so humble . . ."

PORT ROYAL ISLAND. At the bottom of the Bay of Campeachy—well known to Dampier and his dubious associates.

PORTO RICO. West Indies. Now a colony of the United States.

PURBECK ISLAND. In the English Channel, off the Dorset coast. The scene of the tragic wreck of the East India-man *Halswell* in 1785, when 166 people were drowned. Though called an island, it is more correctly a peninsula.

RAGGED ISLANDS. Off the Newfoundland coast. It seems to me that a multitude of other islands should be so named.

RATAN (or RUATAN). In the Bay of Honduras. The scene of the remarkable self-imposed exile of Philip Ashton in order to escape from pirates, in 1722. He lived alone for nearly a year without weapons, tools, or shelter.

RÉUNION. Once called Bourbon. One of the Mascarene group, in the Indian Ocean, the best known of which

ISLAND MISCELLANY

is Mauritius. Discovered in the early sixteen-hundreds by the Portuguese navigator Mascarenhas.

RHODES. In the Eastern Mediterranean. Famous for its brazen Colossus, a statue of Helios, the sun-god, which straddled the harbour, and was justly counted one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

ROANOKE ISLAND. North Carolina. The scene of Raleigh's unsuccessful attempt at colonization in the years 1585 to 1587.

SABLE ISLAND. About thirty-five leagues off Cape Canso, Nova Scotia. Recently the Canadian Government have planted it with several thousand coniferous trees, to render the isle more conspicuous from the sea.

ST HELENA. South Atlantic, 1200 miles from the west coast of Africa. Immortalized as the scene of the exile of Napoleon, the ghost of whom must still haunt its verdured hills.

ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT. In Mount's Bay, Cornwall. A modest but very lovely imitation of the incomparable Mont Saint-Michel across the Channel. These two rocks, surmounted by Gothic fabrics, are among the geographical wonders of the world.

ST PAUL ISLAND. In the South Indian Ocean. Crater of an extinct volcano. The rim is partly broken down, forming an entrance to a natural harbour.

SALT ISLAND. Another of the Virgin Isles.

SALVAGES. Small isles lying between Madeira and the Canaries, and only noteworthy for the diverting tales of fabulous pirate gold hidden there—they say, to the tune of over two million pounds.

SAMOTHRACE. One of the isles of Greece, and whence came the lovely fragment the Winged Victory.

SAN SALVADOR. The name given to one of the Bahamas by Christopher Columbus, and now identified with Watling's Island in that group.

SANDWICH ISLANDS. The ugly name for the beautiful

ENCHANTED ISLES

Hawaiians, and christened after Lord Sandwich, one-time First Lord of the Admiralty. The islands are now Americanized almost out of recognition, and a sight of Honolulu would make Tusitala and Liliokulani turn in their graves.

SCILLY ISLES. About ten leagues off Land's End. A compact group of about 140 isles and islets. Also a group in the Pacific, in 16° 28' South, 156° 10' West.

SCRUB ISLAND. Another of the Virgin Isles.

SCYLLA. The rock of Scylla and Charybdis fame, between Naples and the island of Sicily. On account of the strong current running between the two rocks—the other being Charybdis—the ancient sailors feared that if they escaped one they would likely fall foul of the other.

SCYROS (or SKYROS). One of the Grecian isles.

SEYCHELLES. An archipelago in the western side of the Indian Ocean.

SHETLAND ISLES. Group north-east of Orkney. Once Scandinavian.

SICILY. The largest isle in the Mediterranean, and the unenviable possessor of the active volcano Etna. Palermo, Catania, and Messina are the principal towns. The last-named was practically destroyed in 1908 by the most disastrous earthquake in the history of the world, when 84,000 lives were lost.

SKERRIES. A cluster of islets in the Irish Sea off the Anglesey coast.

SKYE. The largest of the Inner Hebrides. The ground is full of Norse antiquities.

SOCIETY ISLANDS. A sylvan group in the South Pacific, and unimaginatively named by Captain Cook after the Royal Society. Chief island, Tahiti.

SOCOTRA. A large, sun-baked island off the entrance to the Gulf of Aden.

SOLANDER ISLAND. Off New Zealand, and a famous cruising rendezvous for Yankee whalers.

ISLAND MISCELLANY

SOLOMON ISLANDS. Known as the Savage Solomons, on account of the hostility of the natives to former explorers and traders. Probably the last of the world's islands to submit to Aryan domination. In the Western Pacific, east of New Guinea.

SOUTH GEORGIA. Large, mountainous island on the fringe of the Antarctic, and used as a whaling station for Norwegian *concessionnaires*. The first point of civilization reached by Shackleton and his five companions after their hazardous boat journey across the Southern Ocean in 1916.

SPICE ISLANDS. A name loosely given to many isles in the Eastern seas, especially to Ceylon, Banda, and the Moluccas. The Spice Islands seem to have been one of the romantic objectives of the late medieval navigators. Cipangu and the Isles of Spice—have we not read of these in connexion with Columbus?

STAR ISLAND (or ÎLE L'ÉTOILE). One of the Amirantes, in the Indian Ocean.

STATEN ISLAND. To my knowledge there are two of these—one off Tierra del Fuego, at Cape Horn, and familiar to every Southern Ocean windjammer sailor, and the more commonly known Staten Island opposite New York harbour. The former is one of the most desolate places on earth; the latter is, *per contra*, a popular suburb for some of Manhattan's struggling millions. The contrast between these two twin-named isles is remarkable.

STROMBOLI. A volcanic cone rising out of the Mediterranean off the north coast of Sicily. The mountain has the unique distinction of being perpetually active, and at night presents from the sea an awe-inspiring glow from its truncated cone.

SUGAR LOAF ISLAND. Off the Madagascar coast. Unimportant apart from its amusing name.

SUMATRA. Next to Borneo the largest island in the Malay

ENCHANTED ISLES

Archipelago. Owned by Holland. Notable for the large variety of the bigger and more sought after menagerie specimens—noticeably the tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, sun-bear, tapir, and the manlike orang-outang.

TAHITI. See Chapter IV.

TENERIFFE. The principal isle of the Canaries. Noted for its Peak of Teneriffe, whose white-topped cone can be seen over a hundred miles away. A useful landmark for navigators, its elevation is 12,200 feet, a gigantic boss rising sheer out of the ocean.

TEXEL ISLAND. Lies off the coast of Holland. One of the Frisian Isles.

THOUSAND ISLANDS. An astonishing group of river islands in an expansion of the St Lawrence, and numbering approximately seventeen hundred.

TIERRA (or TERRA) DEL FUEGO. The ‘Land of Fire’ of the early navigators. The bleak isle that forms the extreme southern point of South America, and the scene of numerous tragic shipwrecks.

TOBAGO ISLAND. Robinson Crusoe’s own isle. In the West Indies, twenty-two miles north-east of Trinidad. Now populated with people of mixed European and African blood.

TORTUCA. An insignificant isle off the Hispaniola coast, and made historically famous as the favourite *pied-à-terre* of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main, who used to carouse, rest, and refit there. Takes its name from the number of tortoises found there. *Tortuga* is the Spanish for ‘turtle.’

TRINIDAD. The large square island off the coast of Venezuela, and not to be confused with the smaller isle of that name lying out in the Atlantic east of Brazil, and reputed to be the hiding-place of an enormous store of pirate treasure.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA. A lonely group in the South Atlantic,

ISLAND MISCELLANY

colonized by the descendants of the *Blenden Hall*, which was wrecked there in 1820, and by a handful of others for whom bumbledom has no attractions.

TWELVE APOSTLES ISLAND. One of the Crozet group, in the South Indian Ocean, and the scene of the wreck of the ship *Strathmore* in 1875, when forty odd people were marooned almost destitute for seven months before being taken off by an American whaler. Also a group of twenty-seven isles in Lake Superior.

VALENTIA ISLAND. Off the west coast of Ireland, County Kerry. Here several transatlantic cables come ashore to connect Europe with North America.

VENICE. An island city in the Adriatic. See Chapter VI.

VIRGIN ISLANDS. A group of small isles in the West Indies, and mentioned frequently in these pages.

VULCANO. The southernmost of the Lipari Islands, and fully justifying its sinister name.

WALCHEREN. One of the picturesque Dutch islands lying *below* the level of the sea; protected by dykes.

WATLING (or WATLING'S) ISLAND. See San Salvador.

WESTERN ISLANDS. The Azores.

WINDWARD ISLANDS. Part of the archipelago in the West Indies known as the Lesser Antilles, as distinguished from the northern group known as the Leeward Islands. Physically they all lie to the windward of the main, since they are exposed to the steady trade winds from the Atlantic.

WOLF ROCK. Known for its graceful lighthouse. Off Land's End, Cornwall.

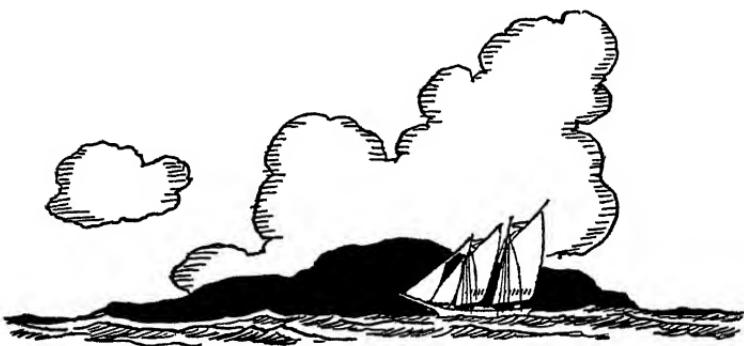
YEZZO (or HOKKAIDO). Northern island of Japan. Climate less mild than Hondo. Mountainous and densely forested. Here are many of the Ainu race.

YSABEL. One of the Savage Solomons.

ZANZIBAR. Island in the Indian Ocean off the East African littoral. Seems to be noted mainly for its famous *opéra bouffe* sultanate.

ENCHANTED ISLES

There are also Carrot Island, Cat Island, Haron Island, Raisin Island, Sepulchre Island, Dog Island, Hazel Island, Nut Island, Apple Island, Boquet Island, Burnt Island, God Island, Fish Island, Serpent Island, Dead Island, Red Island, High Island, Sunk Island, Crane Island, Cow Island, Bull Island, Calf Island, Pearl Island, Tin Can Island, Whale Island, Thursday Island—and a thousand more; but these will suffice.



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